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PATIENCE PETTIGREW'S PERPLEXITIES

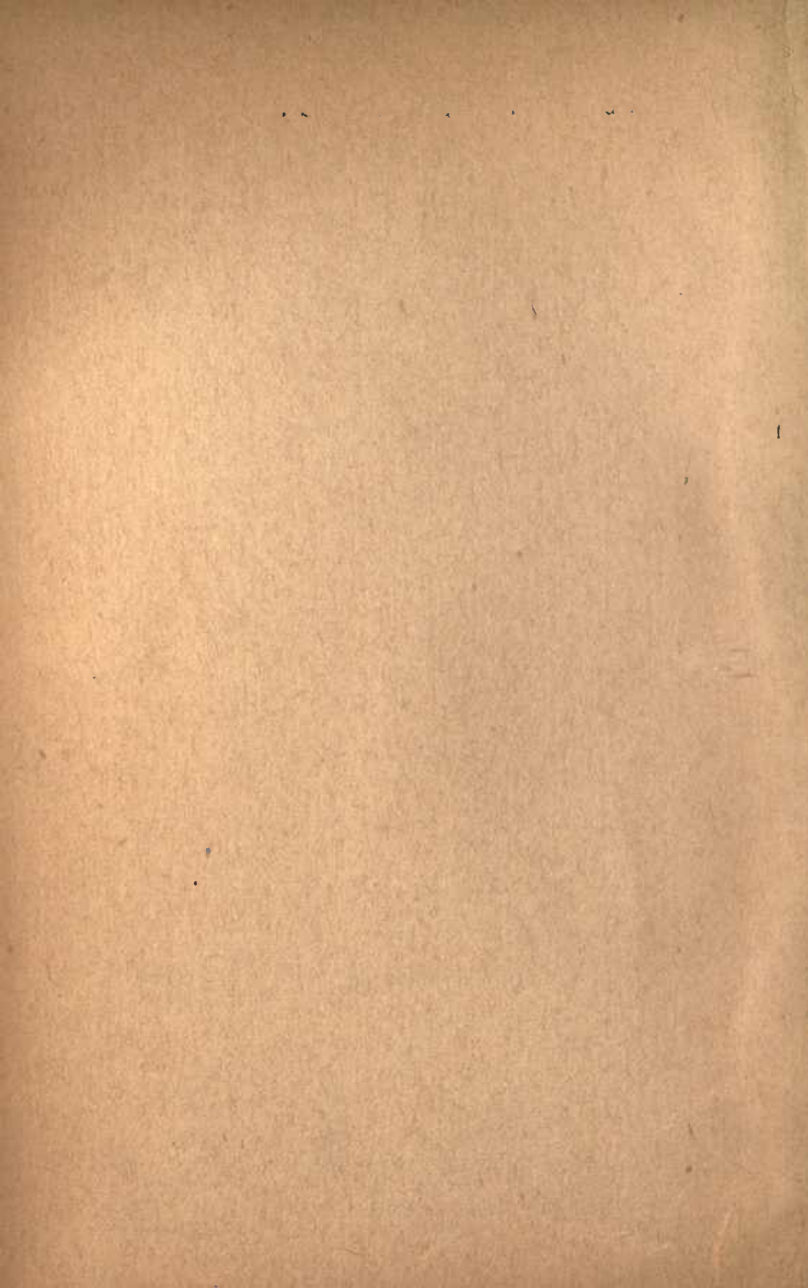
ing a Veracious History of the Experiences
of Patience Pettigrew, relict of the late
lamented Josiah Pettigrew, Esq.,
Etc., Etc.

1
By CLARA AUGUSTA,

Author of "The Rugg Documents," Etc., Etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY THOS. WORTH.

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"BUT THIS IS A MEDICINE WARRANTED TO MAKE YOUR TEETH WHITE,
YOUR CHEEKS RED, YOUR HAIR CURL, ETC."

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Patience Pettigrew's Perplexities.

CHAPTER I.

I MARRY JOSIAH PETTIGREW.



SEZ SUSAN to me 'tother day, as we was setting picking over dandelion greens, which I eats for my liver, and to regulate my gastruck juice—and I must say that dandelions beats everything in that line that I ever seed or heerd tell of; and you want to dig 'em up, root and branch, with a dull case knife, and bile 'em in a little water, so that they will be black when they're done, and as bitter as gall and wormwood mashed together, which bitterness is the beauty of 'em, and it's a blessing to be able to take medicine and vittles all at once with a sousing of vinegar and pepper to make it go down easy. Sez Susan to me:

“Ma, why don't you write?”

“Who to?” sez I, took all aback, and trying to think if I owed anybody a letter which I never writes to nobody but your Uncle Obed, and he is in Ostraly raising sheep for a living.

“Oh, for nobody in particular,” sez she; “I mean write for the papers, as a good many other folks do. Write things and have 'em printed.”

“Good gracious land, Susan!” sez I; “you must be out of yer head! I hain’t got no eddication worth mentioning, and at the spelling school over to the Ridge the other night I got spelled down on the word ruester, a male hen, and I hain’t so sure as I can spell it now, though I know one when I see him.”

“Eddication hain’t required to make one a literary person,” sez Susan, jest as if she understood all about it. “All you want to do is to write just as you talk, for you know, ma, you are a dreadful glib talker. Aunt Giles sez that your tongue is hung in the middle, and runs at both ends. And that’s jest what a writer ought to be.”

“Oh, shaw!” sez I, “how you do flatter a person, Susan Pettigrew!”

“Why, ma,” sez she, “I’m sartin you could beat all creation, and Novy Schoshy hove in.”

“Wall,” sez I, “I used to be pritty considerable peart when I was younger, though I hain’t so old now as a good many people I could menshun; and though perhaps it don’t look well for me to say it myself, I was allers considered a good-looking woman, especially after I lost my front teeth, which was rather longish, and got my ’tothers, which was somewhat more shortish. And sence yer poor father left this vail of sin and sor-rer, Susan, I have noticed that the men sect as hain’t wives has been as perlite to me as a baskit of chips; and Deacon Foxglove—though, to be shure, his wife was only berried three weeks ago last Monday, and was as natral a looking corpse as ever I seed, and had a butiful

coffin—he found the place for me in the Sam book last Sunday, and looked so sweet and good-natured when he passed it over the pew railing. And when he jined in singing these lines:

“ ‘ Oh, give me tears for others’ woes,
And *Patience* for my own !’

he looked rite at me, as much as to say I was the *Patience* he meant.”

“ Deacon Foxglove is a nice man,” sez Susan; “but he has got a wart on the side of his face.”

“ So has Ginral Grant,” sez I, “if one may judge by his pieters, and I’ve often thought that if I was him I’d buy a stick of looner carstick and take that wart off.”

“ And so might Deacon Foxglove,” sez Susan.

“ To be shore!” sez I; “but the deacon is a pious man, and might not think it right to alter anything the Lord has made. He wouldn’t kill the caterpillows onto his trees last summer, because the Lord made ’em, you know. The deacon is a good man, though, to be shore, I wouldn’t marry the best man in the world, unless I should be injused to change my mind, which Heaven forbid! But a woman ort to do her duty through thiek and thin, and the deacon’s wristbands, I noticed Sunday, was fraggled awfully. A single woman can get along comfortable, but a single man’s at the marsies of the world; and I’m shore the sight of one allers makes my eyes water, and my [mouth, too—I pity the poor critter so!”

“ Ma,” sez Susan, “you was allers a sympathetic woman!”

"I've got a feeling heart in such cases," sez I.

Here the pork that was biling to season them dandelions needed to be seen to, and Susan and I sed no more.

Ever since I've been thinking it over, and I've concluded that there is a good many things I might say, and Susan has got some eddication, and could help me put in the commers, and simmy colens, and the dashes and explateration pints, I 'spose.

Anyways, she's what they call eccomplished, and can play on the acorjeum, and work yeller cats on peporated paper, and do sums like—"what will you pay for thirty-five yards of calico at ten cents a yard, when you git trusted for it."

I don't brag much on Susan, but she's rather a smart-ish girl. Her father was a Pettigrew; I was a Higgins.

Josiah Pettigrew was a very likely young feller when I married him. Dear me! how well I remember the first time I ever seed 'Siah!

I was at a husking at Jim Small's, and Small's son, Joe, was jest a kissing me, with a "red ear of corn" in his hand, when in came 'Siah Pettigrew, as was a visiting Capen Leighton's folks. He was right from Ding-boro, and had on store clothes, and ile on his hair, and a ring on his little finger, and scent on his handkercher, and taken altogether he was stunding!

Joe Small had just got me cornered in the sheep's pen, for the husking was in the barn, and was jest a rubbing that red beard of hisn over my face, when along rushed 'Siah Pettigrew, and stuck in his oar, and sez he: "Hold on there, Jim! Give me a chance!" And he made a



"HOLD ON THERE, JIM! GIVE ME A CHANCE!"

dive for me, and I ducked my head, and got out under his arm, and started to run, and as I went I warn't pertickaler where I went, and I brung up in the "tie up," and 'Siah after me, and the minit he caught me he kissed me, and that was the way our courtship begun!

Three months after we was married, and 'Siah made me a good husband, though he would drink too much occasionally, peace to his ashes!

He used to visit Jibson's grocery after tea and sugar nights, and come home about ten or eleven o'clock in such a speritooal condition that he'd go to bed with his boots on the pillers, if he warn't seen to. It did seem as if he didn't know his feet end from his head end.

I tried all sorts of experiments onto him, even to soaking live toads in his likker, and sewing him up in a bed-tick, but nothing seemed to do any good; and at last I thought of one more thing.

He was a dreadful superstitious man, and believed in ghosts and witches by the wholesale. I don't suppose he would have gone up garret alone after dark for the world, but he would go to Jibson's after rum.

I rigged out a suit, and fixed myself up to skeer him. I put a yeller flannil petticoat over my head, and tied a sheet round my neck, and stuck a table-cloth onto a bean pole, and laid in wait for him one dark night, rite under the wall of the old graveyard on the Bay road.

Bime by he cum wriggling along, switching the bushes with a long stick, and singing:

"We won't go home till morning
Till daylight doth appear."

And at the end of about every line he'd roll to one side, and lose his balance, and over he'd go; and after laying still a minnit, he'd pick hisself up, and feel of his head, and remark:

“What a clap that was! Dreadful thunder this sum—sum—summer! Ain' exact—act—ly safe for a fel—fel—feller to be out! Gits struck so often.”

When he got rite against the graveyard, I jumped over the wall, and as I did so, that sheet ketched in the stones and brought down almost a rod of the wall with a rattle enuff to wake the dead; and at the same instance, two other figgers sprung out from the shadder of the wall, and all of us made for the middle of the road—and rite at Josiah.

I hain't much of a believer in ghosts, but I'll confess my hair stood up as them figgers rushed out from among the graves. Old Nancy Blinks is berried in that graveyard, and she and I used to be at swords' p'int, and I scalded her dog once, and the fust thing I thought of was that the old lady had cum back to settle with me about that dog.

I sot out on the dead run, and so did 'Siah, and so did both them figgers, all of us trying to git away from the tothers. The fust house I cum to was Sam Simons', and the fust bilding was Sam's hen coop, and I dashed right in among the biddies, and out cum Sam's son, Dick, who is a dime-novel reader, and sports a revolver, and he fired five shots into the coop, and killed two roosters and a pullet; and then as I rushed out and he seed that white sheet, and that yaller petticoat, his heart

failed him, and he jumped into the well in search of the truth, I s'pose, sense they say that truth is only found at the bottom of a well.

Sam Simons come out in his night-gound, and upsot me with a blow from a hoe-handle; and then the cat was out of the bag. But Sam was a temperance man, and when I had told him the story he agreed to keep mum; and he and I fished Dick out of the well, and no bones broken.

The other two ghosts, as we found out afterward, was Peleg Sleeper and Ellen Marier Knight, who was a courting, and old Knight warn't agreed, and they had to meet when and where they could.

The next morning I found 'Siah in the haystack with nothing sticking out but his feet—there warn't hay enuff to cover them.

He never went out by night afterward, and he died a year or so after, aged fifty-six, and respected by all who knew him. "*Resurgeum!*" that's on the tombstone, which cost seventy-five dollars, all sot.

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCING THE "CLEAN SWEEP."



WHEN Josiah died, and went down to the grave, "beloved and lamented," and left me a lone widder, he left me with three pledges of our love—otherwise known as children—two gals and a boy—or was it two boys and a gal? Yes, I think it was. Cesar Augustus—that was the oldest, and we called him Seeze for short—and Susan Elizabeth Sarah, the next oldest, and Thomas Didemus Xerxes, the last.

I beg here to state that their father named 'em all. I had nothing to do with it. Josiah was a very highfalutin man on some pints. My darter is a very sober-minded and well-disposed young woman, but them boys is as full of mischief as a caterpillow's nest is of caterpillows, and they'd jest as soon play their jokes off onto their grandmarm, or the governor, as on anybody else. I've done my best for 'em, and bought 'em a Bible apiece, with a red kiver, and sent 'em to Sunday school, and spanked 'em faithfully; but it don't seem to do much good. Howsomever, I hope time will do the job for 'em afore they are seventy-five, and take down their sperits a peg or two.

My father was a doctor—Dr. Higgins, of Coldspring. He was an Injun doctor, though he was jest as white as you or I; but he doctored Injun fashion, with roots and

yarbs. When he died he left his bottles, and resates, and things to me.

He had allers mannerfactored a medicine that beat anything I ever cum acrost, in its particular line of bizness. It was called the "Purgative Clean Sweep," and the name was well deserved. If you've never took any of it, you're neglecting a sollum duty; and if you go on in that way, the next thing you know you'll find yourself in an untimely grave.

The Clean Sweep will do wonders for you. It'll cleanse your cistern from all humors, make your skin pure, and take off freckles, and curl your hair, and change the yellowest old grinders to pearls, and make a broken-down, low-spirited woman feel like a new man. Only one dollar a bottle, and warranted to make a clean sweep, or the money refunded.

When Josiah died, you may well believe I was lonesome and forlorn. A woman 'misses a husband terribly after she gets used to him. There's nobody to look for at night, and no old pants to mend, and no dirty shirts to pick up, and nobody she can wake up about midnight and send out in the cold to see if the clothes-line hain't broke and let the piller-cases and towels and things down into the mud; and wust of all, there's nobody to spit her spite out onto when she gets provoked about anything, and feels as if she must talk or bust.

After Josiah's tombstone was up, and I'd planted some rose bushes, arbor vities, and locuss trees round 'em, and had got my mourning things made up, with crape half a yard deep round the bottoms of the gounds, and a dread-

ful job it was to get the dust out of it; and I'd advise all of my friends as is liable to have to wear mourning, to mourn in something that hain't got no crape on it, if they think they can possibly stand it, for crape is one of the chief trials of being in mourning; and as I said, after I'd got my mourning done, there didn't seem to be nothing left for me to do.

It was November when I'd got through with my fixing, and Aunt Priscilla Sharp was a staying at our 'us. Priscilla is a spinster, and has allers been on the lookout for a man, but there don't seem to have been no pervision made for her in that line. Something was out of jint in creation, I ixpect. She thinks so, and it's a consolation to her to lay the blame of her being an old maid onto Providence.

Priscilla is a dreadful woman to make visits; she'll stay a year in a place, and seem to think it's a kindness to them as she's a living onto.

I'd got an idee into my head that I'd travel and peddle the Clean Sweep, and let Priscilla and Susan navigate to home, and I told 'em so.

They was both dreadful shocked, and they talked to me like a father to a child, and told me I was onsecting myself, and making myself reedekulous ginerally. I told 'em to hold on rite where they was, and not set up nights to lament over me. I told 'em I didn't calkerlate to onsect myself, nor dissect myself, and that I was a gwine to take it easy and larn to peddle. I told 'em I had looked at it in a morril pint of view, and I felt that it was a duty I owed to the American people, to intro-

duce the Clean Sweep to their notice, and I told 'em that if I could prevent a single old man or woman from going down to the grave in sorrow, and gray hairs, and stomach ache, I should feel myself well repaid for my efforts; especially if I got a dollar a bottle for what cost me from twenty cents to a quarter of a dollar!

We had a pony to our 'us—a white critter, and as full of camfire as ever you seed anything that stood on four legs. His name was Abraham—called Abe, for short.

Seeze he is handy with tools, and he made a box and painted it green to put the Clean Sweep into, and it had the name and vartues of the medicine painted onto it in gold letters, and was fitted into our old markit waggin, which Josiah used to kerry butter to the Corner in.

I conclewded that it would look more bizness like and respectabler to have a pardner along, so I took Seeze into the consarn for the Co., and to navigate the pony, which had a habit of gitting discourraged and stopping whenever the fit took him, which was jest as likely to be in front of a lokermotive ingine as anywhere. Seeze sed it wouldn't be no use, in case he should stop on the railroad track, to try to pull him off; but I told him he could pull at his head and I at his tail, or *vicy versy*, and I guessed we could manage to pull him in two, so that the ingine could squeeze through between the pieces!

I had some handbills printed to strow round over the country, telling the community at large, and other folks in ginral, about the vartues and graces of the Clean Sweep. I told 'em it would make the homeliest face in the world bewtiful as a picter, and you all know that if

there is one thing that everybody wants it is to become bewtifuller than they was.

Seeze was delighted to go with me, for he was in hopes he should come acrost some new gals, he sed. He's a dreadful boy after the gals, and can't be easy unless he's courting half a dozen of 'em to a time.

After we was fairly imbarked into the old waggin, sez I:

"Now, Seeze, let's understand one 'tother in the beginning. You're to stick to bizness, and not go a racing after every gal you see, and letting the Clean Sweep and yer ma go to the dickens."

"All right, ma," sez he; "I won't look at a petticoat. And to make the thing even all round, you mustn't be a casting sheep's eyes at any of the men sect."

"Why, Seeze Pettigrew!" sez I, "for shame! when your pa hain't been above six months in his grave!"

"Nevertheless, he is there!" sez this onreverent boy, "and for all practical purposes six months is just as good as six years in such a case! And if you get taken with any male biped I shall feel as if I had a right to buzz the girls."

"I don't know what you mean by buzzing," sez I, "but I'll give you leave to do it, anyhow, if I forget that I am the widder of the late Josiah Pettigrew, Esq., and that he hain't been more'n six months in his grave!"

So one fine morning we sot fourth.

The fust day we met with no adventures worth men-

tioning, and we driv into the ruril deestrucks of the State of Maine. We sold two bottles of Clean Sweep, and got paid all in coppers for one bottle, and in butter and eggs for 'tother. The folks that bought the last bottle was dead broke in the money way, but their cisterns needed seeing to all the same.

We put up for the night at a farm-house where they was shelling beans. The name of the head of the consarn was Tim Flynn. He had two pritty darters, whose disgustive orgins were all in tune, or they wouldn't have had such red cheeks.

But the old lady was colicky, and the old man sed he thought some kind of medicine that would ransack her cistern thoroughly would be the salvation of her. And he sed he'd keep us all night for a bottle of the Clean Sweep.

The oldest gal's name was Sarah, and I could see that it was dreadful hard work for Seeze to keep clear of her. But I had faith in his promise, so I sot easy.

Along in the course of the evening there was one of the neighbors come in to while the time away and help shell beans.

His name was Mr. Gibbs. He was sandy-haired, and had a very large nose. So had all the illustrious men of old. He was a widower with seven children.

Poor critter! how I pitied him! He told me his sorsers, and the tears fell like rain into his red bandanner handkercher. I sympathized with him, and told him about Josiah, and the toomstun I had put up to his memories, and about the Clean Sweep; and he told me

how he had had the collery infantus, and a bile on his back, and nobody to poultice it, and bathe his aching spine!

And I sithed, and he squoosed my hand under the bean vines, and I squoosed his'n. There was no harm in it, for we was both members of the same church, and it is not wrong for church people to squeeze one 'tother's hands, or even to kiss each other, if they want to. It helps to bring out their social elements.

Seeze, he had disappeared. Gone to bed, I expected, for he was tired nigh about to death, he sed.

Mr. Gibbs asked me if I wouldn't step out on the piazza with him, and see if I thought it was gwine to rain. He sed he wanted to haul some wood the next day, and he was afeerd of rain. So I stepped out, and it was so dark that he offered me his arm for fear I should walk off the edge, and he went out to the farder eend and stepped into the grape arbor and sot down. He didn't say nothing, but we kept up a lively thinking.

I thought two or three times that I heerd sumthin' rustle rite close beside us, but I expected it must be the wind, and sot easy. Byme-by I heerd sumthin' that sounded like—wall, a kind of a smacking sound that it hain't easy to describe, but a'most everybody knows how it sounds.

And in a minnit a sharp voice yelled out:

"If you don't let me alone I'll holler murder! I swow I will! so there!"

I was skeered, and so was Gibbs. He was a narvous man, and he fell to screeching:

"Murder! thieves! help!"

Then somebody come at us all in the dark, and swore at us, and punched Gibbs in the stomach, and called him an infernal old donkey, and then the fust thing I knowed I was sculped of my new false hair, and many



"IN THE MIDST OF IT OLD FLYNN MADE HIS APPEARANCE."

as three or four dogs cum from somewheres and pitched in, and I kicked, and Gibbs kicked, and somebody else kicked, and in the midst of it old Flynn made his appearanee with a pitchfork in one hand and a lantern in 'tother.

CHAPTER III.

A RAILROAD ACCIDENT.



HE WAS all dumfounded at the sight which met our eyes as the light of Old Flynn's lantern shone onto the scene. As the novel writers say, "It was a scene for a painter!"

There stood Gibbs, with one eye out—it was a glass one as I found out afterward; and I had lost fifty dollars' worth of my skulp, warranted all long hair and not dyed, and thirty-two inches long; and if you'll believe it, the folks that we'd heerd kissing one t'other in the dark, and that had kicked us, and skulped us, was none other than that ondutiful and onregenerate son of mine, and Sarah Flynn!

I was so overcome that I had to grasp Gibbs' arm for support, and lean onto his manly breast in feminine weakness.

For I had put confidence in Seeze, and how cruelly he had deceived me. Oh, treachery! thy name is men folks!

"Seeze!" sez I, "I am grieved and astonished at you, and my heart is sore! At this rate, my son, it won't be long before you will bring my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave!"

"According to present appearances, ma," sez this disrespectful boy, "you won't have any hairs, gray or otherwise, to bring to the grave, or to any other place!"

You're dredful nigh barefooted on the top of your head, I should say!"

"Seeze!" sez I, "I'm took all aback! struck all of a heap at your conduct!"

"Just my ease with regard to you, ma!" sez he.

"A gal that you never seed, nor heard tell of, till two or three hours ago!" sez I, "and hugging and kissing of her out here in the dark, jest as if you had been a school-mate with her, and her ma had sed you might."

"And you out here in the dark, Mrs. Widder Pettigrew, a being hugged by a man with a glass eye, that you never seed till an hour or two ago, and the late lamented Josiah not yet six months under the sod! Mrs. P., I am ashamed of *you*! 'And the shoes not yet old with which you followed,' etc., etc., to quote the immortal Shakspeare; and the crape half a yard deep around the skirt of your dress, and mourning borders on your handkerchiefs—oh, lordy! lordy! I feel as if I could creep into a knot-hole! Say, captain, you don't happen to have one laying round loose anywhere, do ye?"

Old Flynn took a chaw of tobacker, and wopsed it over two or three times, and spit twice, before he answered. Then, sez he:

"It's about six and a half a dozen! Better offset, and call it square. The old lady and Neighbor Gibbs has had it their way, and this young jackanapes and Sarah has had it their way, and it's the natral way of things, after all; and by jings! I've done jest so myself! Come in, all of ye, and less have a drink of sweet cider!"

There warn't nothing more sed about it, and the next morning Seeze and I agin sot fourth.

So far, Abe had behaved like a gentleman, and I told Seeze that it did seem as if hauling the Clean Sweep had swept the tantrims clean out of that hoss critter! But before the day was over, I found out that it haint never best to crow till you're clear of the woods!

We rid through a very nice track of country, but there warn't many houses, and most of the people was onfortinitely in good health, and didn't want no Clean Sweep.

Along toward night we come to a house sot down in a pitch pine swamp. It was one-roomed, and had a lean-to on the hinder end, like a bustle on to a city belle; and there was three sheep, and some hens and roosters, and four children, and a baby, and five dogs, and a pig, all on the doorstep, and a man with a red shirt on sawing wnd cluss by.

He was smoking an old black pipe, so short-stemmed that it seemed as if his nose must be iron-clad, or it would have got burned off; and indeed he might have spared half of it and not hurt him, for it was as long as the President's Message.

"Seeze driv up to the door, and all the dogs barked, and all the hens and roosters cackled, and all the children began to yell and pull hair. The man he stopped sawing, and shaded his eyes with his hand, and looked at us, and then he yelled out to somebody in the house :

"Old woman! I say, old woman! Somebody's cum!"

"Look here, mister," sez Seeze. "Anything the matter with your disgustive apparatus?"

"Hay?" sez the man, staring at him.

"There'll be a short crop of it this year, wont there?" sez Seeze, "but may I inquire if your liver be in good tune?"

"Hay?" sez the man, staring wuss than ever.

"It was twenty-five dollars a ton, and on the rise, the last I heerd of it!" sez Seeze, "but that's nothing to do with your internal orgins. Want any Clean Sweep?"

"No," sez the man; "my old woman uses a hemblock broom!"

"But this is another thing," sez I; "it's a medicine, warranted to make your teeth white, your cheeks red, your hair curl, and to clean your cistern from all impurities and humors, or the money refunded! 'The A No. 1 thing for the disgustive orgins, and ——"

"Hello there! Hello, Hanner!" shouted the old man to the house. "I say, come out here! Here's a couple of Irishmen or Frenchers, dashed if I can tell which, and see if you can make anything out of their lingo!"

Out cum a middle-aged woman in a checked gound, with a blue apron on, and a red shirt, the mate of the one the man had on, in her hands, and she was a wringing the soap suds out of it as she cum.

"What in nater do you want, Sam Grimes!" sez she. "You're allers in diffikilty. What's cum acrost ye now?"

He pointed to us, and Seeze he opened fire on her afore she could say anything.



“BUT THIS IS A MEDICINE WARRANTED TO MAKE YOUR TEETH WHITE,
YOUR CHEEKS RED, YOUR HAIR CURL, ETC.”

"We're introducing a new medicine," sez he; "most wonderful thing of the age! Everybody needs it. Nobody can do without it. Sets you up prodigiously! Makes the old young, and the homely beautiful! The life of man, and woman, too! Inspires the intellect! All great men take it. Washington took it straight, without sugar, every morning! Napoleon took it on the field of Waterloo! Goliath was full of it when he killed David, or was it vicy verser? Shakspeer couldn't exist without it! Of course you know Shakspeer?"

"Shakspeer? Shakspeer?" sez the man, rubbing his forehead. "I guess not, mister. One of the revolutionary fellers? Britisher or Yankee?"

"Oh, good Lord!" sez I, "whoever seed such a man? Never heerd tell of Shakspeer?"

"Mebby the old woman has!" sez he. "Say, old woman, 'taint that new tin peddler that cheated ye out of ten cents 'tother day, is it?"

"Dunno nothing about him, nor don't want to!" sez she, giving the shirt a shake that slung the soap suds into my eyes and mouth, and nigh about choked me.

"How is your internal orgins?" sez Seeze.

"I hain't got no orgin," sez she; "there hain't no orgin in town but Suke Smith's, and there ain't a-going to be!" and she went into the house and slammed the door to behind her, and Seeze and I driv onards, jest the same as we was afore.

We sold six bottles of Clean Sweep as we went along, and run over a dog and lamed him, and stove in some-

body's frunt fence by Abe's running against it in one of his tantrums, but otherways everything was lovely, and Abe had behaved like a hoss angel.

We driv into the village, and the Clean Sweep went off like hot cakes. I was as happy as if I had struck ile, and Seeze whistled like a canary bird.

As we driv along quite a crowd of boys and dogs followed us to hear Seeze explaterate, and to see him perform.

Pritty soon we cum to a railroad track. It was the first one we had cum to, and Abe is allers full of kinks when he sees one. I began to expect he would have a contrary fit, and I told Seeze to hold on.

Abe he sot back his ears, and planted his fore feet onto the track, and there he stood like a statoot. There warn't no such a thing as stirring of him. He'd made up his mind, and when once he's sot, he's as sot as the hills. All the boys hoorayed, and all the dogs barked, and Seeze he swore at the pony, and I laid the whip onto him, and he stood there and seemed to enjoy the sensation he was a-making.

And rite in the midst of it we heard the screech of an ingine, and the flag man cum a-running, and yelled out to us:

"Drive that old plug of your'n along, or you'll be killed!" and he added a few swearing words by way of ornymment.

"My onriligious friend," sez I, "I'm sorry to dissypint you, but it can't be did. This annimile has got a mind of his own which it ain't easy to change."

The flag man grabbed Abe by the head, and giv a pull as if he expected the hull concern to start at once, but instid of that Abe got up onto his hinder legs, and let his forud paws down onto that flag man, and he tumbled heels over head onto the track, and round the curve cum the ingine, and the whistle a-sounding, and the ingineer and fireman a-screeching, and Seeze and I a-sitting there awaiting to be launched into eternity.

CHAPTER IV.

A TRIP TO THE WHITE MOUNTAINS.



ESOT there, transfiggerated as it were into stun. Nary one of us spoke a word. Seezed afterward that it was the fust time he'd ever seed his ma into a place where her tongue didn't work.

Seeze is a dreadful impudent, sassy boy. He was brought up on the bottle, and I've often thought that it would have been better for him to have been brung up at the end of a birch stick.

The train cum thundering along, and I knowed the fate of the Clean Sweep was sealed. Fifty dollars' worth of it, to say the least. It would be a dreadful loss to us, but who could help it? Nothing short of a merrykle could save us.

I shut my eyes and tried to say a prayer, but I couldn't seem to think of nothing to say. Folks that has cum pritty nigh death are allers saying that they think of all their past life in a minnit, especially of what they've done that wasn't on the square; but I'll be switched if I could think of a single thing except this line of Shakespeare's:

"There was an old woman who lived in a shoe."

While I was trying despritly to think of the next line,

that hoss of ourn give a leap—jest as the smoke of that ingine covered us all over and shut us out from human view—that hoss give a leap and cleared the track, waggin and all—made a clean sweep of it generilly—and bust rite through a board fence into some woods, and skedaddled through a garden, and out onto the street, and then, with one flying leap, he dashed rite through the big winder of a milliner's shop, where a tallish woman, with a kind of a starved look about her, as if she was afraid to eat all she wanted for fear her time would be up, was trying on a bunnit afore a glass.

“Oh, hevings!” yelled she, as Abe stepped about a foot from her, “he’s come! and I not in my ascension robes! Lord help me!” and down she got on the floor afore Seeze, who had alighted from the waggin and begun for to wriggle round. “Elder Bangup sed, last Sunday, that even then he could hear the rumble of his chariot wheels, but I never dreamed he was so nigh! And he’s cum with a little white hoss and an old woman—maybe you’re Abram’s wife?” sez she to me; “or the wife of Simon whose surname was Peter?”

“No,” sez I, “I was the wife of the late lamented Josiah, whose surname was Pettigrew; and what on earth are you trying to make out of this? Who do you take us for?”

“I am an Advent,” sez she. “It’s the only true religion. We’ve been looking continually for the coming of our Lord. Many a time have we been disappointed, but last Sunday the elder sed the time was nigh. He sed the chariot of the Lord would come suddenly and

“THAT HOSS GIVE A LEAP AND CLEARED THE TRACK, WAGGIN AND ALL.”



with a great crash, and when I seed you I thought it had come!"

"Gracious deliverance!" sez I, "you must be out of your mind to take me and Seeze for anything of that kind; and as for Abe he's better fit for a hoss for Mr. Satan than he is for anybody else, consarn him. And this hain't the Lord's chariot by no means. It's the markit waggin of the late lamented Josiah, and I'll venture to say there's been a ton of butter hauled to markit in it, fust and last. And now it's full of Pettigrew's Patunt Purgative Clean Sweep, which beats everything else in natur in its own pertickerler line. It'll clean the cistern from all humors, and make a new critter out of you. You'll feel as if you'd been born agin rite off. It'll make your cheeks red, and your hair curl, and your teeth white, and it'll cure the wust temper in the world, and no questions asked. Only one dollar a bottle, and satisfaction warranted or the money'll be refunded."

Seeze he was busy a backing that hoss critter of ourn out of the shop, and the milliner was a scolding about the damage that had been done her fixings; and in the midst of it along rushed a man, hatless, and out of breath, and stopped the doctor rite in frunt of that shop as he was a riding by.

"Dreadful accident," sez he. "Run for your life, doctor. Man and woman killed, and hoss and waggin all blown to atoms! Bust up by the railroad! Ain't found any remains yet, but expect to. Scores of men hunting for 'em!"

“Gracious!” sez the doctor, turning his old hoss round in a jiffy, for the doctor was a young one, and they’re always on the lookout for a job. “Glorious chance for a post-mortem. Blown to atoms! No bones to set? Sorry for that. Broken bones bring fat fees. How did it happen? Remains not found, eh?”

“No, but expect to find some of ’em every minit,” sez the hatless man; and off the two went, the doctor laying the whip onto the old hoss, and the ’tother man explaterating about the accident.

I told Seeze that he and I would git into the waggin, and go and see ’em pick up our remains, and hold a post-mortem over ’em, and we got into the waggin and sot sail.

When we got to that railroad crossing there was a big crowd gathered, and the engine was a standing waiting on the track, and all the passengers was out poking round through the bushes and turning up the leaves to find our remains; and the village minister was a standing on a box and holding forth to the people about the awfulness of the thing, and how it stood every mortal man and woman to git reddy to be blowed up on the railroad without no onnecessary delay.

“Strange sarcumstance,” sez an old man that had been down onto his hands and knees scratching round in the rubbish, “that we can’t find so much as an arm or a leg, or even a *piece of the harness*. I seed the whole thing from my house over yonder. The ingine give out a puff of smoke that hid everything, and when it was blowed away the hoss, waggin, man and woman

was as clean gone as if the airth had opened and swallowed 'em up."

"I'm afraid," sez the doctor sadly, wiping his nose with his handkercher, "I'm afraid there won't be any post-mortem."

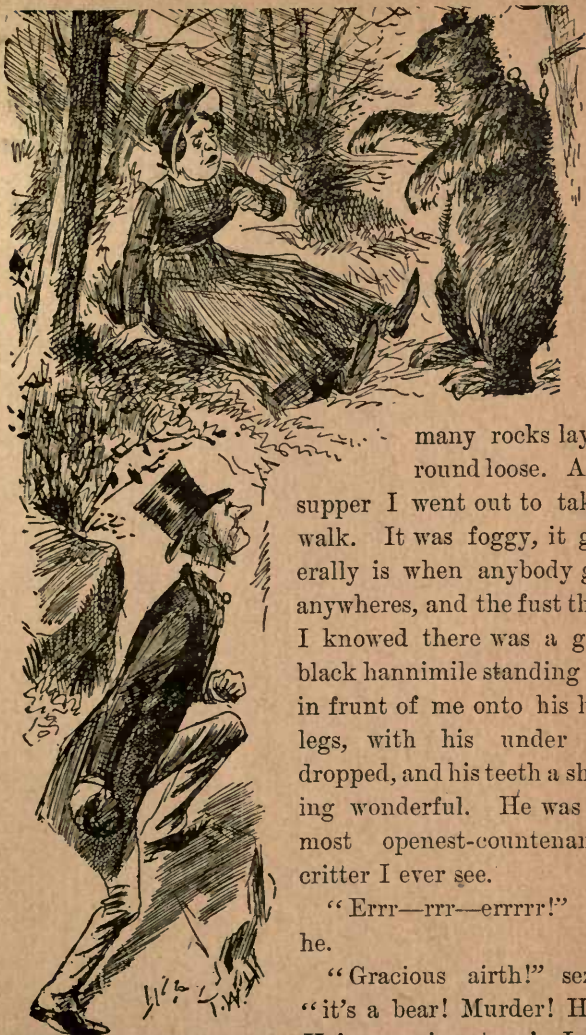
"My friends," sez I, stepping up onto the box in the waggin, "you might as well all go home and attend to your biznesses, if you've got any. I'm the woman as was blowed to atoms, and I feel jest as good as new, and here is Seeze; and the pony is good for another trip. And there hain't going to be no post-mortem onto me, nor none of my folks."

How the people did cheer and stretch their necks to git sight of us, and how they shook hands with us, and took on over us generally. We all sot for our forty-grafts, hoss and all, and I must say that Abe looked as natral as if he'd growed onto that piece of pasteboard. I sold out my Clean Sweep, every mite and grain of it, on the spot, and I've no doubt but what the people of that place are all cleaned out by this time, if they've took the medicine faithfully. I'll venture to say that their eisterns has been pritty thoroughly ransacked.

After we'd sold out, Seeze and I went home, got a new recruit of bottles, and started for the White Mountains. I've been wanting to go there for quite a spell, and I thought we could peddle and see the sights all to once.

Without anything's happening worth telling of, we reached the Glen House, and put up for the night.

It is kinder hilly round here, and there's considerable



"THE BEAR JUMPED FORRUD,
AND I FELL ONTO THE GROUND."

many rocks laying round loose. After supper I went out to take a walk. It was foggy, it generally is when anybody goes anywheres, and the fust thing I knowed there was a grate black hannimile standing rite in frunt of me onto his hind legs, with his under jaw dropped, and his teeth a showing wonderful. He was the most openest-countenanced critter I ever see.

"Errr—rrr—errrrr!" sez he.

"Gracious airth!" sez I, "it's a bear! Murder! Help! He's a coming at me! I shall

be devoured and turned into a bear! I wish I'd staid to home. Drat the White Mountains."

The bear jumped forrard and I fell onto the ground intirely overcome, expecting every minit to feel them teeth of his'n come a crunching rite into my skull.

"Patience Pettigrew!" sez I, "widder of the late lamented Josiah, it's ali up with ye!"

And I closed my eyes and awaited my fate.

CHAPTER V.

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.



AND AS I laid there, wishing I was to home, braiding rag carpets, I heerd a rapid step, and a wheezing voice called out:

“Take courage, marm! *I’m* here, and I’ll save you, or we’ll perish together!”

And I looked up and seed a middle-aged man with a cane, and an eye-glass, and he was a picking up rocks to fire at the bear. The fust one he let fly hit me rite on the jint of my left great toe, the jint that has bothered me most to death ever since last summer, a swelling up so. It nigh about upsot me, and I felt as if I wished the man with the eye-glass had kept away. But then, the best of us is liable to make mistakes.

He fired again, and the stun went about twenty feet beyond the bear, and the bear stood there and laffed at the proceedings jest as well as a bear could laugh. You could see all his teeth to once, clear from one ear to tother!

Jest as he was a going to let the third stun fly I heard a chain rattle and an idee stole o’er me.

“Hold on, my friend,” sez I, “I dunno but what the critter is *chained*.”

And I got up and crept with trembling limbs toward

him, and shure enuff he *was* chained, and couldn't git away no more'n as if he'd been in the State's prison.

I went back to the man and give him my hand. I have read heaps of novels, and I know just how to act on such an occasion. The heroine allers glorifies the hero that saves her from peril, and I would glorify my hero.

"Noble sir!" sez I, "words fail me to thank you for your brave conduct. But for you, I shudder to think what would have been my fate. Accept my thanks. The thanks of Patience Pettigrew, widow of the late Josiah."

"Ah, ma'am," sez he, "I'm afraid you greatly over-estimate my most humble and unceremonious attempts to snatch you from the dire hands of an irrevokable destiny. But while the stars shed their luster upon this mundane sphere from their home in the celestial dome of ether, I shall never cease to pour benisons upon the Creator that I was in near propinquity to preserve you if need be."

And he flourished his eye-glass, and bowed till his nose nigh about touched the ground, and the buckle on his suspender straps bust in two and jingled to the airth.

I seed to once that he was a collidge larnt man, and that riz my respects for him rite up. I admire larning. It is a great thing. It is nigh about as good as money.

"Kind sir," sez I, "your modesty is great, but that don't prevent me from seeing that you've got the courage of a prince. Might I inquire your name?"

“Dearest madame!” sez he, “I am calléd the Duke of Wellington. Maybe you have heard my name mentioned?”

My breath was clean took away. A duke! a real duke! Well, what was a duke, anyhow? I tried to think, but somehow I couldn’t seem to make it out. Any way, a duke is a bigger man than a squire.

“I dunno!” sez I; “seems to me it does sound natral, but I thought the Duke of Wellington was dead long ago!”

“A great mistake, madame!” sez he, with another flourish of his eye-glass, “a most egregious and inexcusable mistake! Dead! A great man never dies! He is immortal! He lives forever! He is as imperishable as an amaranthine flower.”

“Excuse me,” sez I, “I must have been mistook. No offense, I hope, to nobody.”

“Not at all, illustrious lady,” sez he, “and if you will permit me to kiss your fair hand I shall be amply repaid for all my trouble.”

“’Taint very fair now,” sez I, “because I’ve worked outdoors considerable this spring, and that hain’t favorable for white hands, but sich as they be, you’re welcome to kiss ’em.”

And he took ’em both, and touched his lips to ’em, and squeezed ’em, and bowed over ’em, and all I needed to complete my happiness was to have Almiry Jane Splicer there to see my hands being kissed and took on over by a live duke.

I dunno as I’ve mentioned Almiry Jane in these

records before, but I might as well say that she is an old maid, and in plain words she and I hate one 'tother! 'Taint Christian like, I know, but sich things will happen, and I'll defy anybody to live anywheres nigh Almiry Jane Splicer and not hate her. She's been dead set after a man, ever sense I can remember, and she hain't got him yet, and hain't likely to; she's fifty, if she's a day.

She courted Josiah after he was married enuff to kill him, and every batcheldore and widower for miles round has been the object of her attentions, until the poor critters had as soon meet a devouring lion as Almiry Jane.

Well, to cut a long matter short, the duke and I fell in love on the spot, and we went back to the Glen House arm-in-arm, and I give him a bottle of the Clean Sweep to take for his digestion, and I interduced him to Seeze as his future parient-in-law, and Seeze spread his hands out over us like Parson Prime when he renounces the benedickshun, and sez he:

“Bless you! Bless you, my children! May you live long and prosper!” and then he throwed up his hat and gave three cheers for his future pa.

The duke and me visited every place of interest in cumpany. It was delightful to have found a congenial sole, he sed, and that was the way I felt. It is a very sweet and comfortable feeling.

The wedding day was sot.

We was as happy as a clam, as happy as a bed of clams, in fact. Seeze had also found a congenial sole, in a Miss Boles that was boarding at the Glen.

She was a little oldish for him, but when I attempted to argyfy with him about it, he sed if he lived long enuff he should be as old as she was.

She was rich, and she took to me like everything, and called me "ma" right along, as natral as could be. It made me feel more like a respectable parient than ever to hear her.

All of us was agwine to the summit, and I insisted on riding Abe. He is a good saddle hoss as ever was when he don't take a notion to stoop up behint.

The duke was to walk, so was Seeze, and several others; and Miss Boles and I, and three women, was a going hoss back.

We cantered off in fine style, and was soon going up rising ground. The path to the summit was as good a road as ever you see, except that one way it is all up hill, and 'tother way it's all down hill.

Abe went along tip-topish till we got to the place they call the "turning field." There he stopped. We coaxed him, and licked him, and pulled him by the bridle, and sed "Good colty," to him till we was all tired, but not an inch would he budge. He wasn't agwine up that day.

The duke he stepped behind him, and grabbed him by the tail, and he give a tug, and as he did so, that horse stooped up as aforesaid, and let fly them heels of his'n, and I went off over his head, and the duke was knocked clear into the air and down over a slantindick-erler precipice to Jerico.

"Gracious Peter!" sez I, "I shall be a second time a

lone widder! I'm never to be a ducheess! No, never!" and I throwed up my hands and swooned in the arms of a fat man who rushed up to receive me.

CHAPTER VI.

REV. GALUSHER MUGGLES.



HE FAT man's breath smelt of onions, with a sprinkling of whisky and tobacco thrown in, but I have found by experience that a good many men's breaths smell the same way, and if a woman must needs have a man a hugging of her, she must put up with it.

The fat man give me a very sympathetic squoze, and begged of me not to die then; it would spile all the pleasure of the day, he sed.

"And besides, my dear madam," sez he, "it would be so onconvenient getting the corpse down off from the mountain."

Seeze, onfeeling boy, sot straddle of a rotten log, and laffed and whistled, and told the fat man not to take on, that the ole woman would come round in time.

To think that the boy I nussed, and physicked with castor ile and magnesia, and spanked till he was red as a biled lobster, should live to call me "the ole woman," and to whistle "Not for Joe," while there was a prospect of my dying rite off.

It made me so mad that I jumped out of the fat man's imbrace and flew at Seeze and give his ears such a boxing that I'll warrant he'll remember it to the day of his death.

The healthful exercise brought me clean to myself, and I begun to remember the duke. What had been his fate? I begged of 'em to sarch for him, that I might know the wustest.

And I begun to wonder if it would be proper for me to put on fust mourning for him, spozen he was dead, and if it would be ixpected of me that I should travel to the country where dukes is plenty, wherever that may be, in order to foller him to his grave?

Some of the party clim down over the rocks to sarch for the body of the onfortinit man, and meanwhile the fat man consoled and comforted me. He told me some of his own troubles. He was a minister of the Gospel, and he had berried two wives, and a third one had gone back on him and left him for a perrymour, and he had had the chronic diary, and the small-pox, and had to go into bankruptcy, and had had his house burned down, and seventeen sheep killed by dogs and lightning, all within the short space of nine year, which beat my afflictions all holler.

I give him a drink out of a bottle of Clean Sweep that I had in my pocket, and he smacked his lips and sed that though it was a sad and dying world there was a grate many blessings in it, and he whispered in my ear that if the duke was dead he should be happy to take the duke's place in my affections.

Some people might think this was ruther too soon, but a prudent man allers takes time by the forelock.

"Be comforted, Sister Pettigrew," sez the fat man, whose name was Galusher Muggles. "The Lord gave

and the Lord hath taken away the duke, and he is ready to give thee Muggles in return—thy devoted Muggles, Sister Pettigrew,” sez he, with a squoze that bust my corset strings into three pieces.

“Yes,” sez I, “I know all about that; but alas, it was so hard to have the duke took away in this suddint and unexpected way at the heels of that hoss. And he used to make use of such butiful languidge—words full four or five syllables long, that nobody knowed the meaning of but hisself.”

And I begun for to snivel a little into my handkercher.

“Do be comforted, dear Sister Pettigrew,” sez he. “St. Paul sez there is as good fish in the sea as ever was ketched. And being a fisherman, he ort to know.”

“Yes,” sez I, “to be sure; but these afflictions is hard to bear,” and then I give a cry of joy, for jest then the men that had gone in sarch of the duke made their appearances, and the duke was with ’em, alive and kicking, and none the wuss for having tumbled down the mountain.

The fat man’s countenance fell, and he hove a sigh.

“Muggles,” sez he to hisself, “it’s all up with you.”

When the duke spied me he rushed toward me with ixtended arrums.

“Star of my life,” sez he, “what do I behold? Darest thou recline upon the bosom of another? Inconstancy thy name is—Mrs. Pettigrew. Oh, that mine eyes had been blasted before I had beheld this evidence of thy perfidy. Die, monster, die?” and he rushed upon Muggles in a way that no fat man could stand aginst,

and they both went down, and began pounding, and kicking, and larrapping one t'other in the most dreadful way.



““DIE, MONSTER, DIE!” AND HE RUSHED UPON MUGGLES IN A WAY NO FAT MAN COULD STAND AGAINST.”

My hair fairly stood on end, for I expected every minnit they would git too nigh the edge of some of them

precipices and bounce over, but that Seeze of mine he was right in his ellersments.

He'd slap his legs and holler:

"Go it, old boys! Sick him, for No. 1. Hang to him, for No. 2. Hooray, my jolly braves! Don't leave a whole bone in his body, No. 1. Ditto, No. 2. Crack him—he deserves it!" and so on.

I did the best I could to part 'em. I clawed at the coat tails of both of 'em till I'd convarted their coats into short jackets, and the strips of broadcloth was scattered in every direction.

I had begun to tug away at their galluses when a ker-ridge cum up the hill, with four men into it, and the minnit they seed the duke they pounced onto him like mad.

"We've got you, Tom Jinks," sez one of the men, grabbing him by the collar, and setting him onto his feet in a jiffy. "You've give us quite a race, but we've got you at last," and he put some handcuffs onto him rite on the spot.

"Look here," sez I, "what upon the face of the airth does this mean?"

"Wall, I guess so," sez one of the men.

"This is a duke," sez I, "a regelar born duke. The Duke of Wellington that fit in the battle of Bunker Hill."

"Ha! ha!" sez the men in chorius; "so he has changed his title? He was King George the Third last time. And before that he was Napoleon Bonaparte. Come on, Thomas, we've got a use for you."

“He is my intended husband,” sez I, indignant as I could be, “and I ain’t a going to see him abused in this way.”

“Intended fiddlesticks!” sez the man that had put the handcuffs onto him; “why, old woman, he’s got two wives living, and he’s crazier than a bedbug, and has been for ten years. He cut the throat of one of his keepers, and about a fortnight ago he strangled another one and escaped from the lunatic asylum.”

I throwed up my arms and swooned for the secont time that day, but I didn’t git so fur gone but what I knowed that it was Mr. Muggles’ smell of onions that was wafted to my collapsing oilfactories.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TALL, SPARE WOMAN.



WHEN I cum back to myself I found the duke had gone, but the Rev. Mr. Muggles was there.

And he was still a holding of me, and perspiring like all natur. It beats everything how these fat people do melt in hot weather. That is one great objection to being fat.

“Dearest sister Pettigrew,” sez he, “though the waters of affliction have passed over thee, be not discouraged, for Muggles, thine own Muggles, is here. Wilt thou not trust thyself to me?”

And I thought it over a minnit and concluded I would.

Seeze grasped the hand of Muggles just as he had grasped that of the duke a few days before.

“Bless you!” sez he; “may you live long and prosper. My fathers are as numerous as the sands on the seashore, but my heart is large enough to hold ’em all.” And he patted his stummuk, which was all swelled up a eating and a drinking four dollars’ worth a day sense he cum to the Glen House.

Say what you will about the pleasures and comforts of boarding to a hotel, it is enuff to ruinate any man’s or

woman's stummuk to try to get away with four dollars' worth of vittles in a day.

I didn't mount that treacherous hoss agin, but leaning on the arm of the Rev. Mr. Muggles I finished the journey. He puffed like a steam engine before we got there, but it was done at last, and we stood onto the top of Mount Washington.

'Taint no grate things as 'twas that day. It was all kivered in clouds and fog, and all the krinkles was took out of my hair, which I'd had did up onto beads and hair pins the night before, and I looked as smooth about the top knot as a smelt.

We couldn't see nowheres for the fog; and all the men folks did was to walk up to the bar and drink. I asked Muggles what they was drinking, and he informed me that it was a pepperation kept up there expressly for driving the cold out of the stummuk. He said most men would have the colicks and cramps in that atmosphere if they didn't take sumthin', and I asked him how it was that we women folks managed to stand it, and he sed that was one of the secrets known to Providence alone.

I took out a bottle of Clean Sweep and dranked about half of it, so's to be on the safe side, and I offered some to Muggles, but he declined with thanks; he had already dranked more medicine, he was afeard, than agreed with his delicate cistern.

And he sat down and fanned himself and squozed my hand as affectionately as the state of the weather would allow, and about this time the railroad cum in from the foot of the mountain.

That railroad is a big affair, though the cars hain't very big, and everything about 'em seems like as if it was hind part foremost, and it all leans dreadfully "toward Sawyer's."

When the railroad arriv there was a tall, spare woman, with seven children of all sizes, a tugging after her. I never seed such a noisy flock as they was, and the woman had all she could do to keep 'em in line. Each one of 'em had a satchel, or a bandbox, or a bundle, or a shawl, or a waterproof, and the woman herself had a tin pail with a cloth on it, which was their dinners, I expect; and she had a valise, and a cloak, and a pair of rubber boots, and various small bundles.

"Oh, Mr. Rev. Muggles!" sez I, "do look out, and see this female woman and her tribe. It beats all creation. She must be a lone widder like myself, poor critter!"

"The Lord has promised to have a care over the widder and fatherless," sez Muggles piously, squozing my hand, "and in that bizness, dear Patience, I am the Lord's faithful sarvant!" and he leaned forrud and looked out at the interesting family.

Such a look as cum over him! You never seed the beat of it! His face turned the color of my old gray calico wash gown, he gasped, and swallowed, and panted, and I thought he was a going to faint, and for want of sumthin' better I out with that bottle of Clean Sweep and dashed the remainder of it into his face, which made him look as though he had been through a merlasses hogshead, for the Clean Sweep is quite sirruppy and sticky.

“Lord of heavens!” sez he, “it is Sally Ann!” and he sprung to his feet and dashed out of doors and streaked it down that railroad track like a lunertick.

He was bareheaded, and as his head bobbed through the fog it looked like the full moon in dog days.

I was skairt, for I didnt’t know but what he was took with a crazy spell, and meant to dash hisself over some slantindicular precipice into eternity, and I started after him as fast as my two feet would kerry me. And so did that tallish woman and all them seven children.

And I blessed ’em in my heart for being so symperthizing in what didn’t consarn ’em.

“Muggles!” screamed I. “Rev. Mr.! Hold on a minnit! Don’t go for to do anything desprit! Wait for your own Patience!”

“Mug-g-le-s!” screeched the tallish woman, “if you don’t stop rite where you be, I’ll be the death of you! You old hoary-headed sinner you! You old reprobate!

“Stop!” yelled all the children in chorus, flinging away their bundles, and bags, and baskets, as they went.

What on airth it meant I couldn’t understand, but there was no time for inquiries. Muggles was in danger, and when a feller critter was in peril who ever knowed Patience Pettigrew, relict of the late lamented Josiah, to hesertate?

On we rushed, and the people at the Summit they caught the decease, and all run after us as fast as ever they could.



"AND HE SPRUNG TO HIS FEET AND DASHED OUT OF DOORS, AND STREAKED IT DOWN THE TRACK LIKE A LUNERTICK."

Seeze and Miss Boles they brung up the rear, and I heerd Seeze a hollering:

“Respected ma, don’t let him slip! Pa Muggles, break up, and save yourself in time! ’Taint a good time of year to die. Too hot! Corpus won’t look natral! Save him! Somebody on ahead there save my pa-in-law, and rescue me from being an orfin.”

As we went down the mountain side, the fog warn’t quite so thick, and I could see the bald pate of my adored Muggles bobbing hither and thither like a jack o’ lantern, and I could see that the poor critter was pritty nigh used up. His pace slackened, he stumbled from side to side, and throwed up his hands, and I heerd him cry out:

“Lord save me from her!” and then he disappeared altogether.

“Good land!” sez I, “the airth has opened and swaltered him as it did proud Cory’s troop in Bible times, and again I am a lone widder.”

“Drat him,” sez the tallish woman, “if he’s died now and cheated me agin, I’ll raise Ned. I swan I will!” and as she sed the words she, too, disappeared.

And jest as I was a going to shout to her to rub his wrists and ondo his collar, if she’d got where he was, the solid airth seemed for to give way under me, and I, also, disappeared.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TWIN MOUNTAIN HOUSE.



WENT down and down, and when at last I lit, it was rite on top of that woman, and she was right on the top of Muggles. It was hard on the Rev. Mr., but he bore it like a martyr.

I scrambled out of the place as soon as I could, for I knowed the rest of the family would soon be added to the pile. And so they was. They come one after t'other so fast that you couldn't count 'em, yelling like young Injuns, and kicking and striking out in all directions. There was a jumping-off place there, and Muggles had hit it, and so had the rest of us.

Seeze and Miss Boles come over last, and my gracious! that girl had told me she was only twenty years old, and I'll be hanged if when she cum down her teéth didn't cum before her, and a bunch of hair from the top of her head as big as a dinner plate, and left her skulp as bare and shining as Muggles'!

Oh, the ways of these fashionable women is mysteris, and past finding out. It would puzzle a lawyer to see through 'em.

I was amazed, for though I wear a wig myself, and own up to being forty year old, I didn't hardly ixpect that a woman only twenty would be bald-headed.

Muggles was a setting up against a rock, and the sweat stood onto his forehead in great drops, and in about ekal parts with the Clean Sweep. The two was pritty thoroughly mixed.

"Muggles," says I, "my dear man, are you better? Was it a fit? Are you used to having 'em? Tell your own Patience, dear."

"*His* Patience!" screamed the aforesaid tallish woman. "What do you mean, you old Jezebel?"

"Mean?" sez I. "What do *you* mean? That's more to the pint."

"Mean?" sez she, and she riz up and brandished her fists at me. "I'll show you what I mean if you lay a finger on my Muggles."

"*Your* Muggles!" sez I.

"*My* Muggles!" sez she.

"*Our* Muggles!" sez Seeze.

"*Our* pa Muggles!" sez all them children, gathering around him, and seizing one a leg, and another an arm, and them as couldn't get hold of nothing else, grabbed him by the coat-tails and imbraced them.

"Muggles," sez I, "Rev. Mr., explain this scene. *Are* you, or *are you not*, my betroughed spouse—the intended pardner of the bosom of Patience Pettigrew, relict of the late lamented Josiah?"

"Muggles! Moses Muggles!" sez the tallish woman in an awful voice, "be you my lawful wedded husband, and the parient of my eleven children, or be you not?"

"I—I—guess so," sez Muggles, in a despairing voice.

“Hooray!” sez Seeze, throwing up his hat. “Hooray for my pa-in-law and for the eleven children!”

“Seezer Augustus,” sez I, “it would be becoming in you to keep still.”

“Muggles,” sez the woman, “what do you mean by this extraordinary line of conduct? This is the fifth time within six months that you have deserted me and my helpless children, and now I find you in company with this old hag. And I demand an explanation.”

“Old hag!” sez I. “May I inquire, ma’am, who you mean by old hag?”

“I mean *you*,” sez she. “Moses is allers gallivanting after some woman, but you’re the worst-looking spicemen I’ve seen him with. I swan to man! you look as if you’d been picked, and singed, and drawed through a knot-hole.”

“I’ll show you who’ll be singed,” sez I, for I was mad, as any woman would have been; and I div at her, and at the first claw I peeled her head and knocked four front teeth down her throat.

“Go it!” sez the Rev. Muggles, recovering himself and setting up on his elbow. “Sail in, Patience, she deserves it. Thrash her if you can. The Lord knows she’s thrashed me often enuff, darn her.”

“Don’t indulge in profanity, respected, formerly expected pa-in-law,” sez Seeze.

She dived at me, and tore my gound, and raked down my face, and upsot the cupoly of false braids on the top of my head, and I paid her back with interest. And all them little Muggleses they pitched into me like so many

small dogs, and snarled, and kicked, and pinched, and scratched me, and made life uncumfortable for me ginerally.

“Clear the deck for action,” sez Seeze; “bring on the sawdust. Ma, buckle on your armor. Mrs. Muggles, take courage. Rev. Mr. Pa-in-law, join in the fight and earn some of the glory.”

But Muggles gathered himself up and sotsail from the spot, and about half of them children follored him, and t’other half stayed behint.

Mrs. Muggles she caved in, and sot down suddintly, and she and I talked it over and agreed to be friends. Muggles had been a dreadful poor husband to her, and was in the habit of running away every week or two, and she had the family to support.

And after I had heerd her story I was glad that he and I couldn’t become Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Muggles.

I returned to the Summit a sadder and wiser woman, and so did Seeze.

“Ma,” sez he, in confidence, “it’s my opinion that you and I had better let the fellers and gals alone and attend to business.”

And I agreed with him; but, as time passed on, we both found out that it is easier to preach some things than ’tis to practice ’em.

We went back to the Glen House that night, and the next morning, bright and airly, we hitched up Abe, and mounting that cart of ours sot sail for the Twin Mountain House.

In due time we reached the Twin Mountain House,

and Mr. Barron he sed he'd no doubt but we should be welcome among the guests. For it is well known that if the dyspepsy is a hanging round an individooal, nothing will more surely and sartinly make it grab onto him



"MRS. MUGGLES SOT DOWN
SUDDINTLY, AND SHE AND
I TALKED IT OVER."

than living at one of the White Mountain hotels—and that Twin Mountain House is responsible for an awful site of stummuk difficulties in this world. For the tables there fairly groan with good things, and folks that is a trying to eat the worth of four dollars a day, groan too.

In the evening I went out to set on the piazza. I have

seen a good many picters of Mr. Butler, and as no two of 'em ever looked alike I thought one man was as likely to be him as another, so I looked round on the company and selected him out.

He was a fleshy man, and was reading "How to Become a President," and I knowed that the person who could undertake that must have the patience of a saint, so I went rite up to him and hild out my hand, and sez I:

"How do you do? How's the hay fever?"

"Hey?" sez he.

"Yes, hay," sez I.

"Hey?" sez he, louder than before.

Deaf, sez I to myself. Well, no wonder, poor man! So I yelled at the top of my voice:

"Yes, *hay!*"

And all the people come rushing out a wanting to know if there was a fire, and where it was, and still I kept a yelling "hay," and still he kept a yelling "hey."

CHAPTER IX.

AUNT PRISCILLY.



W HAT on airth is the matter with you?" sez I to him, in a voice that might have raised Mr. Nebudkernezzar if he'd only been a listening. "Have you been struck by litening? I've heern sed that sometimes that would do it!"

"My good woman," sez one of them stage driver fellers that there is so many of round the mountains, "this gentleman is deaf. He has lately come from the asylum an incurable. If you want to communicate with him, write on his slate."

"Write on a cat's fiddlestick!" sez I. "I hain't so hard up to speak to no man as to write onto a slate to do it."

The stage-driver laffed.

"This is not Mr. Butler," sez he. "This is Mr. Brown, of Boston, a shoe dealer."

I offered Mr. Brown a bottle of Clean Sweep, and he uncorked it, and smelt of it, and poured out a handful, and plastered it onto his hair, and it stuck it down as Spalding's Prepaired Glue couldn't have done it.

"Great invention, ma'am," sez he. "Great! Better than glycerine. Better even than lard. Thank you!" And then he put on his specks and went back to his reading.

The people round there seemed to be disposed to laff at me, but I put a bold front on things, and mounting one of the stages that stood at the door, I addressed the ordinance:

“RESPECTED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: I’ve made a mistake, as you see, but I hain’t the fust one as has done it, and ’taint likely I shall be the last. It’s the way of the world to make mistakes. But there’s no mistake about my Clean Sweep. It’ll do all it promises, and more. It will bild you up a story higher in the world than you ever was before. It will recuperate you from an old woman into a young man.”

“Better take some of it yourself,” sung out an imperdent voice in the crowd.

“It will curl your hair, and make your cheeks red, and put the springs of health into you till you’ll feel like a new spring bedstead that hain’t never been slept onto. Only one dollar a bottle! Five bottles for six dollars!”

“Six bottles for five dollars,” sez Seeze, imperdently correcting of me.

“Don’t conteradiet me!” sez I. “I’ve lived in the world longer than you have, my son.”

“I ain’t a going to dispute that,” sez Seeze.

“The Clean Sweep,” I continued, “is the great discovery of the age. It seems to be a pity that it couldn’t have been found out before. It would have saved millions of lives. Alexander the Great, and Herod, and Peter, and Joan of Arc, and all the other patriarchs might have been living to-day if they could have had

the Clean Sweep. To the discouraged it gives new life and hope. It is a source of joy to the down-hearted; and them lines which begins,

“‘I have sought round the verdant earth
For unfading joy,’

would never have been writ if their author had only had the Clean Sweep in the house. Napoleon invented railroads, Professor Agassiz harnessed up the lightning to kerry letters over the world, George Washington invented hatchets, and I disremember who invented steamboats, but it was left to Patience Pettigrew, relict of the late lamented Josiah, to invent the Clean Sweep. Walk right up, ladies and gentlemen, and buy some.”

I sold fifteen bottles before I got down off from that stage, and I heard afterward that it did its duty well, for the tavern-keeper sed that he should have been better off to have bought my whole cargo and pitched it into the waste heap than he should have been to have let me sell it to his boarders to whet up their appetights to such a rate.

We had so nigh sold out our stock of medicine that I thought it would be best to go home and see how Aunt Priscilly was a getting along. So we turned Abe's head homeward, and without any adventure of note, we reached Oyster Bridge. As we driv up the door flew open, and out rushed Priscilly, with an old table-cloth in her hand, with which she was a mopping up her tears, and she was a screeching so's you might have heern her over to the corner.

“What’s the matter?” sez I, prepairing for to climb down out of the waggin, which ain’t no easy job for a woman as has her overskirts and things tied back.

“She’s gone,” sez she, “and took the heft of the bedding, and the blue chany set, and the clothes-wringer with her.”

“Gone? Who’s gone?” sez I.

“Susan ’Lizabeth, sez she.

“Where’s she gone to?” sez I.

“The Lord and Tim Scott knows!” sez she.

“Tim Scott!” sez I. “Gracious deliverance! what has Tim Scott got to do with it?”

And I fairly danced in my excitement, for Tim Scott was a batcheldore of forty-two, who had made consider-able love to me, and owned the best team and the nicest house in Oyster Bridge. And, though I haven’t mentioned the fact before in these papers, Tim Scott was the man that I had allers calkerlated was to take the place made vacant by the decease of the late lamented Josiah. I had firmly intended to marry Tim whenever I got the chance, but I didn’t think it was no hurt to flirt a little afore I settled down into a stiddy old merried woman.

And now he had flowed with my darter Susan.

Oh, what faith could anybody put in men folks?

If I had give way to my feelings I should have then and there ripped the puckerings out of that overskirt of mine, so’s to have allowed of my setting on the ground, and I should have cried till the cows come home, but I didn’t do it. I was mad clean through.

“How long have they been gone?” sez I.



"AS WE DRIV UP THE DOOR FLEW OPEN, AND OUT RUSHED PRISCILLY,
WITH AN OLD TABLE-CLOTH IN HER HAND."

“About two hours, drat ’em,” sez she, shaking her fist at the air.

“Why, Aunt Priscilly,” sez I, “what makes you take it so to heart?”

“Take it to heart, indeed,” sez she. “I wonder who has a better right, and that mean, wicked, desateful, on-regenerated son of onrighteousness ingaged to *me* all the time.”

And she clapped her wrinkled hands up to her wizened old face and bust into tears.

And I busted, too, out of sympathy.

CHAPTER X.

THE ELOPEMENT.



IVE ME your hand, Priscilly," sez I, "for it seems we are both into the same boat in this bizzeness, for I had ixpected to marry Tim Scott, and you had ixpected to marry Tim Scott, and the Lord knows who else ixpected to marry Tim Scott, and Tim Scott has flowed with my darter Susan; and she, desateful, two-faced little hippercrit, a telling of me when I left home not to git to flirting with nobody, and to stay away as long as ever I wanted to. If I had holt of her," sez I, "I'd shake her till she'd wish that she, and Tim Scott, too, had never been borned."

"So would I," sez Aunt Priscilly; "and wuss, too, I'd make 'em wish nobody'd ever been born, or thought of being. It's enuff to try any woman's patience, and make her lose her faith in an overruling Providence, to live fifty year in this vale of tears a looking for a pardner, and then having jest found him, to have a girl like Susan 'Lizabeth Pettigrew alope with him from under her very nose," and she put the table-cloth up to her nose and begun to snivel agin.

"Why, Aunt Priscilly," sez I, "I thought you was only thirty-six year old. That's all you own up to."

"I don't keer who knows that I'm fifty-one," sez she, with a contemptuous snort; "and I'm a good mind to

burn my false hair, and never paint, nor powder, nor nothing else agin. I am, boo, boo, boo, boo!" and she bent back and forth till the strings of her overskirt bust, and the puckerings cum out, and left her as flat behind as 'tis the fashion to be in front.

"There, there, Priscilly!" sez I, "don't take on so. There's as good fish in the sea as ever was ketched——"

"But who's a going to ketch 'em? That's the trouble," sez she, between her sobs; "and they won't stay ketched when there's any giggling, empty-headed young gals round, drat 'em!"

"Don't use no swearing words, Priscilly," sez I. "Parson Prime wouldn't let you lead the female prayer meeting any more, if he should hear you."

"Parson Prime and the prayer meeting, too, may go to the pigs, for what I keer," sez Priscilly, with an angry blow of her nose on the table-cloth. "I'm dun with this world."

"No, no!" sez I, "never say die. We'll foller the fugertives together, Priscilly, and we'll stop the wedding or perish in the attempt. Come on," and I clim into the waggin, and Priscilly follered me, bareheaded, and with the table-cloth a swinging behind her.

"Give my best respect to Mrs. Sister Tim," sez Seeze, lifting his hat as we driv off.

Priscilly told me as we rid along that they had been gone about an hour; that they went in Scott's two-hoss wagon, with the bedding and things in behind, and that they was headed toward Turniptown, which is the largest town in our vicinity.

They'd have to git a license, and a minister, and the use of a church; for time and agin had I heerd Tim say that he'd never be married nowheres but into a church, and I calkerlated it would all delay 'em time enuff for us to ketch up with 'em, if Abe didn't go for to having more of his tantrums.

I hild the reins, and Priscilly laid on the whip, and the way we spun along made the astonished Oyster Bridge folks run to the winders, and gaze at us with their under jaws dropping and wonder in their eyes.

About half a mile from Turniptown Abe cum to a dead halt, and shaking his head and tail he remarked as plainly as a hoss could remark that he warn't a going to travel any further on that line. He wanted to change cars, or stop ten minutes for refreshments, or something of that kind.

But there wasn't no time to bother.

I got out of the wagon on one side, and Priscilly she got out on t'other, and we both started out in the direction of Turniptown at a brief trot. And Abe, being allers on the contrary side, evidently thought from our running that we was a trying to git away from him, and he sot up his head and heels, and with a loud snort took the inside track and went by us in a cloud of dust.

By the time we reached the town we was both of us pritty nigh done for, and the sweat was a pouring down my face in a stream, and Priscilly's paint and powder was washed off in streaks, and her face looked like a piece of striped pink calico that warn't stamped parfict.

There was only one church in Turniptown, and we

made for that. There was some kerridges round the door, and people a standing there. We warn't too late. The marriage was a going on.

"Won't I tear his very eyes out of his head!" sez Priscilly.

"Won't I teach Susan 'Lizabeth Pettigrew the difference between scat and shoo when I git holt of her!" sez I savagely to myself.

"Is it begun?" sez I to a sollum-faced man that stood in the entry, and who was, I s'pose, the sextant. Sextants allers have very sollum faces.

"Hush!" sez he. "Don't speak so loud."

"*Is it begun? I asked you,*" sez I, beginning to feel my temper rise.

"Just beginning," sez he. "Have you a ticket?"

"Darn the ticket," sez I. "Stand aside and let me pass. Me and Priscilly. We'll put a stop to purseedings. We'll show 'em how to alope and kerry the heft of the bedding. We'll——"

"My good woman!" sez the sextant, "don't git excited. You shall go in, if you'll promise not to be noisy. Crazy as a bedbug," sez he aside to himself.

I rushed in, and Priscilly rushed in, and I seed a lot of folks around the pulpit, and concluded they was just a doing the job. The church was dark, as it is fashionable to have churches, and you couldn't see more'n an inch afore your nose.

"Stop!" yelled I. "Stop rite where you be, elder. It can't go on. I might have overlooked it if they hadn't took the bedding and the blue chany, but now, I vow to man, if ever I overlook that fust thing."

"I HUNG THE REINS AND PRISCILLA LAID ON THE WHIP."



“And he was ingaged to me. The mean, desateful, Janus-faced old scallawag,” screeched Priscilly. “And he told me I was the pink and the beauty of Oyster Bridge, and he borrowed five hundred dollars of me to buy new furniture for his house aginst we sot up. Drat him.”

“Woman!” sez the minister, in a dreadful tone. “Do—you—know—where you are?”

“We’re to Tim Scott’s wedding that sot out to be, but ain’t agoing to be,” sez we both in chorus.

“You are very much mistaken,” sez the minister, solemnly, “and may the Lord have mercy upon your onregerate spirits. You are disturbing a funeral.”

And, gracious me! Cum to take a secont look, the people that I’d took for a wedding group was a standing round a coffin, and when I seed how things was, you might have knocked Patience Pettigrew, relict of the late Josiah, down with a feather.

CHAPTER XI.

SQUIRE PILKINS.



STOOD transfiggered, for I've been a mourner myself, and know how it is. Nobody's crape was any deeper round the bottom of their gound than mine was when I first lost Josiah—nobody's.

"Excuse me, my friends," sez I. "'Tongue cannot tell how sorry I am for this little onpleasantness. May I inquire if it is a husband or wife?"

"Neither," sez the minister, severely, as if he was mad with me for asking questions. "It is a batcheldore."

"Like Tim Scott, drat him," sez Priscilly in an undertone. I drawed her away, and left the place in haste, and I must say that there warn't one of them mourners so much ingaged in crying that they didn't take down their handkerchers and gawk at us as we passed out. I like to see folks have some mourners at funerals, even if it is that of a batcheldore—I do.

We passed out into the street, and right acrost I seed Abe turned up to a fence eating a lielock bush in somebody's frunt yard. He had kicked in the dash-board of the wagon, but otherwise everything was in good repair.

I hitched him, and we purseseed on foot to the office of the only squire in the place. Squire Pilkins was jest looking over some money as we entered, and his fat face was as round and healthy as the full moon.

"Anybody been here this morning to be married?" sez I.

"Just gone," sez he. "I fixed 'em up in short order. They was in a hurry. Going to New York onto a bridle tour."

"Old man and young woman?" sez I.

"Rather oldish; name Timothy Scott."

"'Tis him," screeched Priscilly. "'There's no help for me. I must stay a Sharp forever. The Lord has forsook me!" and she ondid the tablecloth, and begun for to blow her nose and take on.

"Gracious Peter!" sez the squire, "what's the matter with her? Fits, eh? Have 'em often? See if this won't restore her?" and he grabbed up a bottle from the table, and let fly the contents all over her.

And it was ink that was into the bottle, and blue ink at that, and you'd ort to have seed Priscilly. She was a sight to behold.

"Bless my soul and body!" sez the squire, "I thought it was cologne was in that bottle, I swan I did. I'll eat my own head off, marm, if that ain't the sollum truth."

"It would be a small job to eat it. It is already skinned," sez I, for there warn't no hair onto it worth mentioning; "but what's did can't be helped. I dare say you *meant* well, and I'll leave her here for you to scour her up while I go after the alopers."

And I took a bee line for the depot.

I was jest in season. The railroad was pritty nigh redly to go out. I seed Tim Scott on the platform a ordering about some baggage, and a rose stuck into his

button-hole. And waiting for him on tother eend of the platform was Susan 'Lizabeth, and I'll die if that critter hadn't got my best purple silk gound made into an overskirt, which she was a wearing over the skirt of my black cashmere as had the widest crape on it, only the crape was ripped off, and ruffles put on instid.

I had jest had time to see so much when the bell rung, and Susan 'Lizabeth clim onto the cars. Tim he run after her, and grabbed the rod atween the cars, but I was to his heels, and jest as he was about to swing himself onto 'em, I grabbed him by the coat tails, and hild on like the toothache to an aged nigger.

"You vile wretch!" sez I; "you'd ort to be kerwoloped from here to the middle of next month! Going round a deceiving disconsolate widders and old maids, and eloping with giggling young gals with their mother's gounds on."

"Hang to him!" sez a sharp female voice behind me; "hang to him till I git there!" and I seed a short, thick-set woman, followed by two leanish girls, all a coming down the platform at full speed.

"Goodness me!" sez I, "has he promised to marry any of you?"

"All of us," sez the fat female, "and seven or eight more that are coming behind. Promising man he is."

The cars started with a jerk, and Scott he give a lurch forrard, which tore them coat tails clean acrost, and left 'em in my hands.

And afore I could make a grab at anything else in the Tim Scott line, them cars had shot ahead, and was

a disappearing in the distance in a cloud of smoke and dust.

He had got the better of me, and gone, but what pleasure there can be in starting out onto a bridle tour with no coat tails on yer body, I cannot imagine. But I 'spose the love of Susan 'Lizabeth made amends to him for his loss.

I stopped and had some conversation with the troop of women folks that had come to help me stop Tim on his bridle journey, and they tore' them coat tails of his'n all to pieces and stamped onto 'em! I stamped some, too.

Then we all rejourned to Pike's ice-cream saloon, and sent for Priscilly, and had an oyster supper. There's nothing like something to eat to cool down one's angry passions.

It was a pitiful case all round, and we sympathized with one 'tother, and told our stories all round, and eat two bowls of oysters apiece, and felt more composed.

Priscilly didn't come so soon as I ixpected her, and I went over to the squire's to see if the ink warn't a'most off from her.

The sight that met my eyes as I opened that office door quite dumfounded me. I thought I had knowed sumthin' about human natur before, but I found out I didn't.

There stood the squire with his arm round Priscilly, and she was a leaning her head onto his shoulder, and he was a wiping away the blue ink and tears with that

table-cloth which was sopping wet, and a sight to be seen, and would never be fit for anything agin; not even dish cloths.

“Priscilly Sharp,” sez I sharply, “what on airth does this



“THERE STOOD THE SQUIRE WITH HIS ARM ROUND PRISCILLY, AND SHE WAS LEANING HER HEAD ONTO HIS SHOULDER.”

mean? Are you beside yerself, and Mrs. Squire Pilkins only berried last week.”

“Gracious Peter,” sez the squire, dropping her as if

she had been a hot pertator, "how do you do, Mrs. Pettigrew?"

"I'm well enuff," sez I, snappish as could be, for though I shouldn't like to own it to everybody, I don't mind telling you that I was pervoked to find that the squire had preferred comforting that old maid instead of me. No female woman lives that likes to see another chosen afore herself, even if she don't keer a red cent about the man.

"The Lord hain't quite forgot me," sez Priscilly, squozing my hand, and as I led her off I heerd her say to the squire:

"You'll be there Sunday evening?"

And he sez:

"Yes, Priscilly."

I took Priscilly to the saloon, and interduced her to the women as a sister in affliction, but she was so sot up with the squire that she had no appetight. After a little more sympathizing talk we broke up, and each and all swore sollumly that we'd never have nothing more to do with the men sect as long as we lived, unless—we changed our minds.

CHAPTER XII.

ALMIRY JANE SPLICER.



PRISCILLY was so full of glory all the way home that the airth warn't more'n half big enuff to contain her; and as for her cossets, she bust the strings of them right in two the very fust time Abe struck into a sperited decanter.

I was ashamed of her. I declare, it would require the intentions of more than one old bald-headed Squire Pilkins to transport me to such a degree. But then I have been married and Priscilly hain't. When anybody's been through the mill they hain't quite so anxious as they would be if they hadn't been.

"Such a handsome man!" sez Priscilly. "So portly! And I allers did hate little men. A large, portly man, that holds his head well up, is the man for me."

"Squire Pilkins looks like a swell-frunt house and a bay window throwed in," sez I. "For my part, I shouldn't want to be tied to a fatted hog."

"You're jellus, Patience Pettigrew," sez she, "jellus as you can be. You'd snap at the squire yerself, bay window and all."

"He's got eight children," sez I. "You'll be mar-in-law to quite a family, Priscilly. Only think of an old maid's being the ma of eight children."

"Tim Scott never began to be tender and delikit like as the squire is," sez Priscilly, musingly. "And Tim is dreadful stingy. All the present he ever made me in the world was three cents' worth of peanuts, and he eat full half of them himself, drat him. But the squire give me two stieks of lemon candy, and some peppermints, and a piece of chewing gum, and a button-hook, and a bottle of cologne—so quick. What he'll give me when we git better acquainted remains to be seen."

And then she didn't talk to me any more, but sung softly to herself, in a dreadful, cracked, piping voice:

"I'm dreaming, dreaming, dream—ing,
Love, of the—e."

When we reached our house, what should I behold but Almiry Jane Splicer a setting onto the frunt steps, with her knittin' work in her hand, eum to make a visit. She'd heern of Susan 'Lizabeth's alopement, and if there's anything Almiry Jane injoys, it's to hang round and torment folk's that's in trouble.

She run out toward us and flung her arms round me, and her knittin' work streamed out behind her for a rod or two; and Lion, our dog, he grabbed it, and shook the needles out of it, and tore it all to ravelings. I ixpect he thought 'twas a woodchuck. He's grate on woodchucks.

"Oh, my poor, dear Patience!" sez she, "my heart aches for you, and mine eyes could weep tears of blood for you in your sore affliction."

"There, Almiry Jane," sez I, "don't take on. I hain't in no affliction that I know of."

“You hain’t?” sez she. “Why, hain’t it true that Susan ’Lizabeth has run away with Tim Scott?”

“It’s true that my darter’s married to the richest man in town,” sez I, “and I’d ort to feel proud of it.”

“Lawful sakes!” sez she, “what airs we do put on. Wall, all I can say is folks is a talking dreadfully about it; and they say that you, and Priscilly Sharp, and a dozen other women ixpected to marry him, and are breaking your hearts about his awful conduct. And they *do* say that Susan ’Lizabeth don’t know how to make a loaf of bred; and as for pies and cakes, she hain’t no more idea of how they’re put together than a wild Injun.”

“That’s a lie!” sez I, beginning for to git mad.

“What?” sez she, her face firing up.

“I said it plain,” sez I. “It’s a lie!”

“Right to my face?” sez she.

“Right to your face, or your back, either,” sez I.

“You old, mean, slandering huzzy, you!” sez she. “You old bitters biler! You old Clean Sweeper!” and she made a pass at me with her perrysol which just grazed my shinyon, but broke my new three-dollar comb all to flinders.

That made me mad, and I clinched her, and she clinched me, and we went round and round like two fighting roosters for quite a spell, or calling one t’other names that ain’t perlite to write down; and Priscilly she stood over us and flourished a branch of the lielock bush, and kept a telling us if we didn’t stop she’d strike.

Almiry Jane tore the muffler off from the neck of my gound, which was pleated in side pleats, and had several yards of ribbon and lace mixed in. It was the best setting muffler that ever I seed, and when I had it on, with some lace frilling basted in underneath it, you'd never mistrust that I had enny neck at all. You'd have thought my head was sot into and growed rite out of them pleatings.

When I heerd that are muffler a ripping, and seed the tatters thereof a waving in the breeze, my angry passions riz, and I made a grab at Almiry Jane's bustle, which stuck out a couple of feet, and was all shirred and puckered and bowed up the awfulest.

At the fust claw the air was filled with fragments of newspapers, and my front yard 'peered as if a tin peddler had been shipwrecked thereabouts.

Lion, he's a dreadful sassy, meddlesome dog, and he jined in the fight, barking and snapping fust at Almiry Jane's gound skirts, and then at mine. Once in a while he'd bite out a mouthful and heave it down, and then he'd watch his chance for another bite.

I hollered to my youngest son, Thomas Didemus Xerxes, to grab a bean-pole and hit him a lick, and he obeyed, and down cum the pole against my back and nigh about busted my spinal marrow clean in two.

Thomas Didemus is a grate hand, when he does anything, to do it thorough. He'll make his mark yet, I reckon.

As we was turning round there we got considerable off from the original battle-ground, and by the time I'd

busted up her bustle and things, and she'd tore the hair all off from my head, and her false teeth was a lying in



"THE FIRST THING WE KNOWED, OVER WE WENT RITE INTO THE BILER OF ROOTS AND YARBS."

amongst the pinks and pansies in Susan 'Lizabeth's flower-bed, we had worked round toward the eend of

the house where there is a bank wall three or four feet high, and right down underneath it is the great biler, that'll hold hold two hogsits, where I bile the ingre-giances of my Clean Sweep.

I didn't notice, and Almiry Jane didn't know we had got so nigh the edge of the wall, and the fust thing we knowed over we went rite into the biler of roots and yarbs, and it was full of water to the brim; and, my goodness me! we went in all over, and great was the sousing thereof.

"Lord of heavens!" said Priscilly, "they're dead now!" and she sot out on the run, yelling murder like a crazy woman.

And jest at that minnit, up rid Parson Prime on his sorrel mare, and never shall I forgit the ixpression of his face as he looked over the wall and seed us.

"Why, Sister Pettigrew," sez he, "I allers thought you was a Congregationaller, but if this hain't baptism by immersion, then I'm beat."

CHAPTER XIII.

AN INFARNAL MACHINE.



ARSON," sez I, "there iz times when a body can't choose what'll they'll be! My religious senterments is onchanged; they are—" but my theology warn't ixplained at that time, for jest then Almiry Jane fetched a kerwollop that sent me down to the bottom of that biler, and I had my hands full with trying to trip her understandings out from beneath her so's I could climb up on the top side of her.

"My good Christian sisters," sez the parson, "come out of that! You'll take cold; and besides, it don't look well for members of the church to cut up such kerdidoes as you be a cutting up! Come out of that!"

"That is easier sed than done!" sez I; "I wonder how I'm a goine to set myself free, with this old Jezerbel a hanging onto my lower timbers, and the sides of this biler so consarned slippery!"

"It never shall be sed that I refused to lend a helping hand to a feller-mortal in distress!" sez the parson, getting down from his sorrel mare, and climbing onto the edge of that bank wall he hild out both of his hands.

I made a dive for one of 'em, and Almiry Jane grabbed at the other, and the parson lost his equalabraham, and down he cum into the biler head fustest; and by this time that biler wasslopping over, and it was pritty nigh

full of the respectable inhabitants of the rooral village of Oyster Bridge.



"I MADE A DESPRIT EFFORT
TO GIT OUT OF THE BILER,
AND SO DID THE PARSON
AND ALMIRY JANE."

"Gehominy Jorum!" cried Seeze, just then appearing into to the scene, "I've lived to see something worth telling to my grandchildren! Hooray! Cesar Augustus, you were not born in vain! No, my boy! For you have seen an orthodox minister baptized, with a sister on each side of him!"

"Seeze Pettigrew!" sez I, "if you don't shet up your sass I'll wallup you, if you are big enuff to go a courting

and stay till twelve o'clock! I swear I will!" and I made a desprit effort to git out of the biler, and so did the parson, and Almiry Jane was a grabbing at the lower limbs of both of us olternitly, and all together we managed to upset the biler and run out, and most of that Clean Sweep along with us!

And when I seed that precious stuff a running, I could have shed tears, for I'd kalkerlated that, being as we was all pious folks, we shouldn't do it any hurt, and that I should bile it off, and bottle it up jest the same as though nothing had happened.

But now, alas! the most of it was lost, and I was full 'twenty dollars out.

Such a spluttering, and blowing, and puffing as there was with us all! Almiry took it the hardest, and laid on the grass panting for breath like a catfish that has been out of the water for a couple of days; and as for the parson, I guess he was the limpest man you ever sot eyes onto!

"It's a judgment on me for my pride and vanity!" sez he, "for I did start out from home this morning feeling a sinful pride in the fit of these new pantaloons! I never had a pair in my life which filled my eyes, and fitted my legs, so well as these! I am punished! I told Mrs. Prime this morning that in these pantaloons I could hardly recognize my own nether extremities, and Mrs. Prime quoted Scripture—she has the Bible at her tongue's end—and says she: 'Jeremiah, pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.'"

I got up, and shook myself, and felt better. The Clean Sweep is a wonderful medercin taken in yer innards, and I've no doubt but it's jest as good on yer outards, if they're anyways out of kilter.

And it grieved me to the heart to think how much of it had been waisted in that biler catastrophe.

As it was, I wrung out the parson and bottled up the wringings, which I am able to recommend to the afflicted as the pure orthodox stuff.

Also, I wrung out Almiry Jane, and she departed for home. She was mad as a March hare, and I've no doubt would have liked to have butchered me on the spot. She didn't say much, but she looked onexpressible things, and I ixpect she swore revenge. She's got an orful temper when it's riled.

The parson he stopped to dinner, and asked a blessing over the cold beans, and cowcumber pickles, an' Ingun bread, dressed in Seeze's clothes, the trousers legs of which cum about half-way down his calves, and the coat sleeves of which reached jest below his elbows. The parson has growed lengthways at an orful rate, but there hain't much more substance to him than there is to the tail of a comick.

Priscilly waited onto the table and did the honors ginerally, and as soon as his clothes was dry the parson took his departer for home, dreadfully down in the mouth and puckered up as to garments.

And I, tired out with the ixcitements of the day, went to bed with my head wet in hot camfire.

I hadn't fairly got settled for a comfortable snooze when Seeze bust in, his eyes as big as sarcers.

“Oh, marm,” sez he, “git up! quick! there’s a box jest left at the door for you? It is labeled ‘For Mrs. P. Pettigrew, the Anthoress. Handle with care.’”

An idee rushed like litening into my head as I took them camfired flannels off from it.

Almiry Jane Splicer meant to be revenged onto me! I had read it in her eye. And this box had cum from her, and was, beyond the shadder of a doubt, an *infarnal machine!*

I had heern tell of ’em.

All extingnished people was liable to have ’em sent to ’em.

No doubt the minnit the thing was ondid it would blow the ondoer into the middle of next week.

I’d allers knowed Almiry Jane was a cruel, wicked woman, for she’d drowned kittens in cold water, whilst I allers heat the water a little so’s to make it easier for the poor things. I believe in kindness to animals myself.

I got up and went down stairs, and found the whole family and the dog gathered round a middling-sized box, that looked like a cheese-box, the cover of which was tightly screwed on, and then tied round with a strong cord.

“Open it,” sez Priscilly. “I shouldn’t wonder if it was a Vermont cheese from Aunt Sally up to Rutland! I do hope it’s a spotted one.”

“Cheese indeed!” sez I. “It’s an infarnal machine.”

“A what?” sez they all, in chorus.

“An infarnal machine from Almiry Jane Splicer,” sez I.

"What's it for?" sez Priscilly. "Lord! I should think there was machines enuff about this house. There's a sewing machine, and a washing machine, and a mowing machine, and a raking machine, and a thrashing machine, and what in natur, Patience, did you go and git an *infarnal machine* for?"

"I didn't git it," sez I. "That Jezerbel sent it for to blow me up. She wants to be the death of me; but Patience Pettigrew hain't to be took in that way. She's too old a bird."

Then I told Seeze to lift it up tenderly and with care, and kerry it out onto the turnip patch, and git a fence pole and stand off and smash it.

"And mind you, run like blazes the minnit you strike," sez I, "for when it busts it'll be liable to blow your head clean off your body."

So Seeze he kerried it out, and we all stood at a safe distance, and Seeze brandished his fence pole and braced hisself for the final blow.

CHAPTER XIV.

A TRIP TO BOSTON.



OLD ON jest the half a shake of a cat's tail," sez I to Seeze, "while I climb onto the woodpile; it won't be so likely, if it busts, to hurt me up there."

And I clim onto the woodpile, and Priscilly she mounted the garding fence, and sez she:

"Patience, if I am kilt intirely, lay me out in my lielock silk, with a white rose on my breast, and tell the squire that my last thoughts was of him."

"Now, Seeze," says I, "all is reddy. I'll give the word of command. At 'three' strike. One—two—three. Fire!"

And Seeze at the word give that box the all-firedest lick that ever you seed anything have, and it split clean in two, and out bounced the nicest, yellereest-green Hubbard squash that ever you sot your two eyes onto.

I felt a leetle cheap, but then anybody is liable to make mistakes, and Patience Pettigrew has never pertended that she was onfallible.

There was a slip of paper pinned to the handle of the squash, which sed it was sent by Mr. Squire Pilkins for our Thanksgiving squash pies.

When Priscilly found out where it cum from she imbraced it, and patted it, and sed it was just like the squire, and so it was, jest about as bald.

Seeze liked never to have finished up laffing at me. I don't know as he need to have took on so, for he laid out so much strength a striking at that box that he busted the straps off from his trouserloons as clean as ever you could have cut 'em.

We had the squash biled for our Thanksgiving dinner, and it was nice, and Squire Pilkins happened along jest in season to partake. It is my candid opinion that if I saw fit I might cut Priscilly out with the squire, but I'm too high-minded for that are. I've had *one* man, and Priscilly hain't never had none, and it would be cruel-hearted of me to meddle with her. I've concluded to let the men sect strictly alone—unless I change my mind—and devote myself intirely to selling the Clean Sweep, and cleansing the cisterns of my feller-critters.

That is to be the noble life-work of Patience Pettigrew, unless, as I sed before, she should change her mind.

I have been thinking matters over for quite a spell, and a week ago I determined on striking out anew.

I've lived sometime in the world, and hain't never been to no very large city yet, and it's quite time for me to be a seeing something of life. I was advised by my friends to go to Boston and peddle the Clean Sweep onto the streets; and day afore yesterday I sot sail for that city, along with two trunks of clothes and a couple of barrils of my medercin.

I've heern it sed time and agin that all big cities is sinks of wickedness, and that everybody cheats there, that there hain't more than one decent kind of an individual to every five hundred inhavitators.

So I went prepared for the consequences.

I kerried two revolvers and a butcher-knife in my satchel-bag, and a bundle of tracts for them as was open



"I KERRIED TWO REVOLVERS AND A BUTCHER-KNIFE IN MY SACHEL."

to morril swasion, and Clean Sweep for them as their stomachs needed ransacking or overhauling.

I'm a little afeerd of the cars; they have such a habit

of busting up and making folks into mince-meat; and every time they whistled I ixpected nothing but what the biler would kick up some tantrum or other, and we should all be lanced into eternity, or some other dreadful place.

When we got eanamost to Boston, a feller cum into the car where I was, with a whole lot of brass things with leather handles, and figgers on 'em, strung onto his arm.

"Baggage, ma'am?" sez he.

"No," sez I; "I guess I don't want to buy any baggage to-day. I've got two trunks and two barrils along with me, besides this satchel bag, which is so heavy it gives me the neurollogy in my shoulder in jest the same spot where I had it last spring. Young man," sez I, "did ever you have the neurollogy?"

"No," sez he; "I never did."

"Then you're lucky," sez I; "for it's the drawingest pain that ever you ixperienced—draws up the leg of a six-foot man so's it would fit the body of a five-footer."

"Baggage, ma'am?" sez he agin, kinder onpatient.

"I told you I didn't want to buy none," sez I; "and if I did, I don't want none of them brass fandangoes you've got—no, sir."

"Madam," sez he, "I havn't anything to sell; I am an agent who forwards baggage. I'll forward your trunks and barrels to any designation," and he passed me over a handfull of them brass *things*, and began to write in a book.

"Look here!" sez I; "jest you take your brass thing-

umbobs, and make yourself skeerce, or I'll call the conductor man. I haint to be imposed onto in no such way as that are. I take the papers, and read 'em, too, and I know all about your swindling, pocket-picking rascals, as go a gallivanting round a deserving, honest people. You don't play none of yer tricks onto me," and I give him a shove which sent him rite into the fat stummuk of a plump-looking old feller that was a injoying a very nice kind of a snooze on the seat oppersit. Them brass things flew off every which way, and the plump man sprung to his feet with a snort, and kicked out, and struck out severil ways to once, hitting two old ladies, and knocking off their glasses, besides nigh almost smashing into flinders the hat of a youngish-dressed, oldish gal that was a setting cluss by.

The two old ladies they riz, and begun for to lay down the law, and punch every body with their parrysols, and the gal she was hoppin', and she grabbed that plump old man by the hair of hiz head, and actilly shook him till the very teeth fell out of his jaws. She had enuff muscle to have sot a whole base ball club up into bizness. It beat everything I ever seed.

The man with the brass things he was mad, and he told the conductor man that it was all owing to that old hag with the red satchel, and he ordered the conductor man to put me off at the next station.

"What do you mean by old hag?" sez I.

"*You!*" sez the young scallawag, shaking his fist at me.

"I'll let you know whether you're afoot or hcrseback,"

sez I—"I vow I will, afore I'm done with ye!" and I seized onto him by his paper collar, which parted amidships, and the shirt-buttons flew round like hailstones when the stormy winds is high.

"I'll attend to her case," sez the conductor man, taking me by the shoulder. "We've jest got to Greenville—I'll chuck her out here!"

And he prepaired for to chuck.

CHAPTER XV.

COUSIN TOM SMITH.



UT HE didn't do it.

He was a slimmish feller, that conductor man was, and if I do say it, I can't be beat in Oyster Bridge for strength and good looks. When I was a gal I could heave any feller in the neighborhood, and I hain't no wuss off as to strength now than I was then.

That conductor man warn't nothing for me.

I let him push me along to the door, and when we got there, I just took him by the two shoulders, and I sot him rite off onto the bank below, jest as slick as a mitten.

"All aboard!" sez I, grabbing the bell-rope for to start her; and she started, and that conductor man was a scrabbling up over the gravel stuns, and swearing enuff to take the hair clear off from a buffalo robe.

But the ingine man didn't see him, and along we went on our way, and Mr. Conductor scooting after at a 2:40 rate. Jest as if he expected to overtake us! I stood onto the platform, and swung my satchel-bag, and hoorayed, and the passengers all laffed, and we went round a crook in the railroad and lost sight of him. I've often thought that I should have liked to have seed him when he got a chance at them train hands.

The country along toward Boston city is pritty thickly settled, and when we got to Boston itself I didn't exactly know it.

The depot was dark as a pocket, and I sot still till I seed that everybody was a leaving the cars, and I up and left, too. I had my satchel-bag, and an extry shawl, and a waterproof, and a bag of doughnuts for Cousin Tom Smith's ten children which lives in Boston; and these things, together with a good-sized pumpkin for Tom's wife tied up in a red handkercher, was as much as I could cleverly manage. I don't approve of folks kerrying much baggage when they're a traveling, but I knowed there wasn't much farming done in Boston, and I thought Tom's wife would be tickled with a pumpkin.

The depot was a crowded place. I ixpict there had been a training, or a fair, or a hoss trot, somewheres or other, for the men and women was a running in every direction, and in one corner of the depot there was a lot of fellers with tin plates on their caps screeching out invitations for us to ride. I was a toiling along with my pumpkin and things, and one of them fellers sez, as sassy as you please:

"Say, there, you old woman, shan't I carry your pumpkin for you?"

"You may go to grass and eat mullin," sez I. "It wouldn't look well for one pumpkin head to be kerrying another."

I made my way out into daylight, and dear sakes! there was more people in the streets than there was in the depot. Everybody appeared to be going somewhere's

in a hurry. I asked one man if there was a fire, or a hoss running away anywheres, but he only stared at me and rushed onards. I hope he got there.

I went out onto the sidewalk, and sot my pumpkin and things down, and looked round me. Cousin Tom had told me that he lived in a brick house with green blinds, and I reckoned it would be easy to find him, for there hain't but one brick house within ten miles of Oyster Bridge, and I had no idee they was so common in other places. But land of deliverance! all the houses in Boston is brick, and the rest of 'em is stun, and how in natur was I to tell Cousin Tom's from any of the t'others?

I was in dispair, and people was elbowing past me, and knocking my pumpkin hither and thither, and I ixpected every minnit they would squash it, and spile it for all practikil purposes.

I asked a tallish man that was a sporting round in a blue neck-tie, with a gold-headed cane in his hand, if he would please to tell me where Tom Smith lived, and he put his eye-glasses on his nose and squizzed me through 'em a spell, and sez he:

"Well, really, ma'am, I do not know about Mr. Tom, but if it was Mr. John Smith, now, I could find him for you anywheres!"

"But Tom lives round here somewheres," sez I.

"I haven't a doubt of it," sez he.

"In a brick house with green blinds," sez I.

"Jess so," sez he.

By this time quite a crowd had gathered round, and

the tallish man spoke to a man that was drest in blue, with a steel button on his breast, and sez he:

"Here, police; here is a woman hunting for Tom Smith."

"Gracious Peter!" sez I. "Don't go for to be giving me over to the perlice. I hain't done nothing. I'll clear rite out," and I grabbed my pumpkin and things, and sot sail, for I knowed that if Almiry Jane Splicer got hold of it that I had been give over to the perlice in Boston I should never darst to show my head in Oyster Bridge agin.

"Stop!" sez the perlice, laying his hand onto my shoulder. "Stop, and let us know what you want."

"I hain't done nothing," sez I, "and I warn't a going to. If it's against the law to bring a pumpkin into Boston city, I'm sorry I did it, and I'm reddy to pay the damidge. I've heern sed your laws was so strict that a cat dassent die anywheres in the city for fear of creation-ing a newsants, but I never dreamed that anybody was to be sent to the State prison for lugging round a pumpkin," and I took out my handkercher and blowed my nose preparatory to shedding a few tears with the idee that perhaps these would melt his heart of stun.

"There! there! my good woman," sez he, patting me onto that shoulder of mine where I have the newrollogy, and which was jest about blistered with mustard poultices, and nigh about killing me, "don't snivel. I know where Tom Smith lives. Right this way; second house from the corner. Sec his name on the door."

I thanked him, and offered him a bottle of Clean

Sweep for his cistern, but he sed he'd lately had it cemented, which the Lord knows what he meant, but I don't, and he bowed and hurried away.

I took up my baggage and went to the house he had pinte'd out, and rung the bell.



A sharpish-looking female woman cum to the door with a broom in her hand.

"Is Mr. Smith to home?" sez I.

"A SHARPISH-LOOKING FEMALE WOMAN CUM TO THE DOOR WITH A BROOM IN HER HAND."

"What do you want of him?" sez she.

I took her for one of the servants, and thought it was none of her bizness, so I answered coldly:

“I wish to see him. I don’t know as it is any of your consarns.”

“I’ll let you know whether it is or not,” sez she, “you old sneaking huzzy, you. I’ve had my suspicions of Tom for quite a spell, and now I’m sure,” and she cum at me with the broom brandished over her head, and thunder and litening in her eye.

CHAPTER XVI.

JANE MARIER.



FELL back a pace, for I warn't quite red dy to die, and I seed murder in her face.

"My good woman," sez I, "don't go for to busting yer biler for nothing. I wouldn't do it. 'Tain't no use. Jess take it calmly——"

"Leave these premises instantly," sez she, "or I'll make you into sassidge meat!"

And she brought that broom round with a whisk which hit the pumpkin, which was a setting onto the top step, and eight or ten feet from the ground; for the house was boosted up high, as most of them Bosting city houses is, with a sullur kitchen underneath.

The pumpkin fetched a bounce into the air, and shot out in the direction of the sidewalk, and as bad luck would have it, hit an old feller as was traveling along plump on the head, and squelched his beaver and busted his specks, besides doing other damidges.

The blow felled him to the sidewalk, where he lay for a secont stunded, and I scooted down them stairs and seized onto my pumpkin. Jess as I had got her by the stem, down rushed that woman from Smith's, with her broom lifted higher than ever, and up jumped that man from the sidewalk, and both of 'em cum at me.

"I'll larn you to be round trying for to coax away

other women's husbands!" screeched the woman, aiming a blow at me with that broom, which I warded off with that pumpkin.

"I'll larn you to garrote the Hon. Marcus Jones, Esq., in the public street when he is in the peaceful pursuit of his bizness!" sez the man, and he grabbed me by that same nerallogy shoulder, and laid on as if his fingers was a pair of pinchers, and two sets of nut-crackers throwed in.

"Let me alone," sez I. "If you don't, it'll be the wuss for ye."

"Darned if I do!" sez the woman, giving me another lick.

"I think I see myself letting you alone," sez the man, shaking me till them false teeth of mine, which is a leetle loose onto my gooms, shook like dried up beans in a pod.

"If you don't stop rite where you be," sez I, "I vum I'll show you how they do things in Oyster Bridge!" and I put down my pumpkin, and took off my cuffs, and prepaired for to defend myself.

"Perlice! perlice!" screeched the man at the top of his voice, and the woman jined in the chorius.

About a dozen small boys, and some dogs that hadn't any other bizness on hand, and a score of men and women had cum along and stopped to see the row.

I'd allers heern it sed that people in cities was much more perliter than they be in country places, but the way them folks stood and stared at me didn't seem to make it appear so.

In about a minnit two of them perlice chaps cum along and wanted to know what was to pay.



“SHE’S AFTER MY HUSBAND—MY LAWFULLY WEDDED HUSBAND!”

“I was a trying to find Tom Smith,” sez I, “and that wizened old hag she——”

“Her dratted pumpkin hit me on the head,” sez the oldish man, “and split my ten-dollar hat, and——”

"She's after my husband—my lawfully wedded husband!" sez the woman with the broom, "and I'll see her in purgatory before I'll let her lay around loose to lead my Thomas from the path of manly vartue and rectitude."

"'Taint no such thing!" sez I. "I don't want to lead astray no men folks at all! There's enuff of 'em round anywheres without my being obleged to take up with married men!"

"What in the duse was you after?" sez one of the perlice.

"I was after Tom Smith," sez I, "as lives in a brick house, with green blinds, and has got a cross-eye, and used to drive a milk-cart, and has got ten children——"

"Ten children!" screamed the woman. "It's a lie! I hain't got but three."

"I can't help what you've got," sez I. "I am talking about what Tom has got."

"How can he have ten and I only three?" sez she, histing of that broom agin.

"I can't say," sez I. "That's for you to find out. I only know he's got 'em!"

She let drive the broom, but I dodged and the blow took effect on one of them perlices, and started the blood out of his nose in a red spurt which flew all over all of us and Mrs. Tom in particular.

And just then a smallish-sized, red-faced man cum rushing onto the scene, and when he beheld that bloody woman he yelled "Murder!" as loud as ever he could, and then flinging up his arms, sez he:

“O Jane Marier! Murdered, and I refused to bring a hod of coal for ye this morning! And I swore because the bread wasn’t half done! And now she’s killed intirely!” and he begun to claw after the hands of Mrs. Tom aforesed.

“Land sake!” sez I, “she hain’t dead! No dead woman could ever kick like that!” for she had just let fly them heels of her’n into the stummack of the perlice feller as was trying to hold her, and smashed his watch crystal, and left a dab of mud onto his vestkitt.

“Jane Marier!” sez the man, “speak to me once more!”

“You dratted old brandy-guzzling sot!” sez she, as well as she could for the tears and blood that was a streaming down her face, “I only wish I had the strength of old Mr. Sampson. I’d choke you right on the spot. A going and having ten children, and I only three! You with ten and your lawful wedded wife with only three! Oh, you old gray-headed hyp-per-hip-per-hyp-per-crit you! oh dear! dear! boo! hoo!” and it did seem as if she would go off into the highstrikes without further notice.

“Dearful heart!” sez I, “I wish I’d stayed to home, with my hens, and turkeys, and appelsass, and other farm projuce, and let the cisterns of Bosting people take keer of their selves!”

“Look here, Jane Marier!” sez the smallish man, “don’t go for to take on so dreadful. I hain’t done nothing. And I hain’t got no children but Mary Amanarder, and Thomas Edwin, and Joseph Nehemial. I’ll swear to it, if it’s necessary.”

“But this woman sez you’re got ten, and that you’re cross-eyed, and used to drive a milk cart, and she’s cum here a setting out to lead you from the path of ____,”

“The cat’s hind legs!” sez I, beginning to get mad. “I hain’t cum here for nothing of the kind! I’m Patience Pettigrew, of Oyster Bridge, relict of the late lamented Josiah, and I’m sole proprietor and manufacturer of the Patent Purgative Clean Sweep that’ll cleanse the cistern from all humors, and aches, and pains, and make you over new in five days, or the money refunded. And I cum here to see Tom Smith, but ——”

“Not another word,” sez the woman, springing to her feet, and grabbing that broom. “I knowed you was after Tom, and I’ll break every bone in your body.”

And she looked pretty much as if she meant to!

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LOST PUMPKIN.



LOOK here," says the perlice feller, whose nose warn't a bleeding, "all of ye stop right where you are. There's some mistake. Mrs. Smith, put down that broom. Squire Jones, pick up your hat and put it on. You are liable to take cold in your head. It's a little bald. Mrs. Smith, calm yourself. Mrs. Pettigrew, relict of the late lamented Josiah, what do you want of Mr. Smith here!"

"I don't want nothing of him," sez I, "darn his homely picter."

"But you sed you cum to see him," sez Mrs. Smith.

"You was after him with your confounded old pumpkin," growled Mr. Squire Jones.

"He warn't the one," sez I.

"Not Mr. Thomas Smith?" sez the perlice feller.

"Yes, it was Thomas Smith I was after," sez I; "him as lives in a brick house with green blinds, and has got a cross-eye and ten children."

"He hain't got but three!" screamed Mrs. Smith, shaking her fist at me.

"Ten!" sez I, "if he's got one."

"Don't git ixcited," sez the perlice feller, patting of me onto that neurollogy of mine. "I want to get at

the bottom of this matter. Is this the Mr. Tom Smith you was after?"

"No, indeed," sez I.

"Why didn't you say so?" sez Mrs. Tom.

"You mind your own bizness," sez I.

"Don't be impertinent, Mrs. Pettigrew, reliect of the late lamented Josiah," sez the perlice feller, patting my neurollogy agin. "So this is not the Mr. Smith that used to drive a milk cart, and has got a cross-eye and ten children?"

"No," sez I; "it don't cum within five rows of apple-trees of being him. I never sot eyes on this loving couple before."

"Oh, Tommie," sez Mrs. Smith, "forgive me, sweety. I might have known you'd never gone and deceived the pardner of your bosom."

And as she hild out her arrums toward him, and he jumped into them and dug his longish nose into the trimmings on her bask waist, and sniveled like a four-year-old with the rebellious colic.

"Oh, Jane Marier," sez he, "how could you doubt me? Me, your own Thomas, that's the father of Mary Amanda, and Nehemiah, and ——"

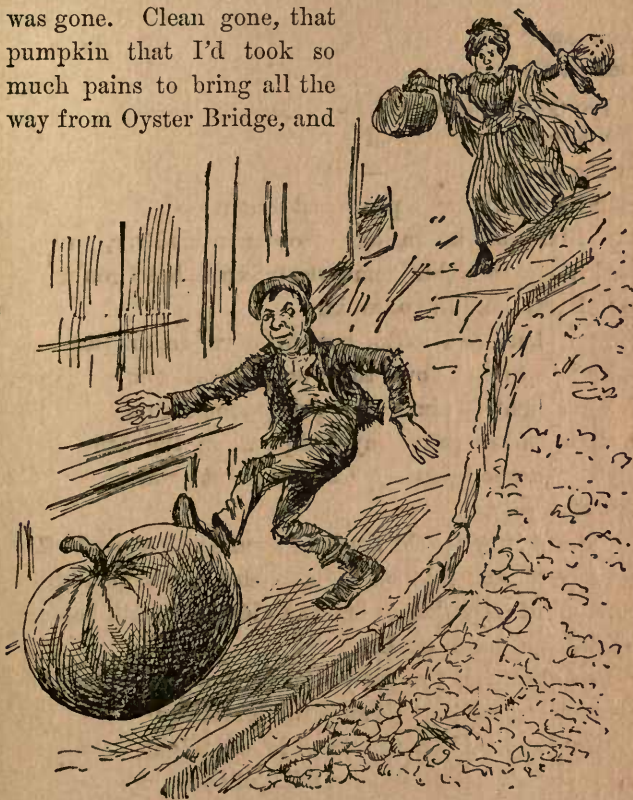
"Gracious Peter!" sez I, "this makes me feel faint to my stummik. You'll ixcuse me, I hope, if I take a little sumthin'?"

And I took the cork out of a bottle of my Clean Sweep, and dranked a largish draught, which made me feel better.

"Now," sez the perlice feller, "we'll help you find your Mr. Thomas Smith."

“Thank ye,” sez I. “Let me git my pumpkin fust.”

And I turned round to take it, and goodness me, it was gone. Clean gone, that pumpkin that I'd took so much pains to bring all the way from Oyster Bridge, and



“AND AWAY I SCAMPERED DOWN THE STREET AFTER A LONG-LEGGED STREET VARMINT OF A BOY THAT WAS A ROLLING THAT PUMPKIN BEFORE HIM JEST AS YOU WOULD A BALL.”

that had passed through so much that it seemed like an old friend, was gone.

"My pumpkin," sez I. "It's been stole. There goes the rascal now. Somebody help me head him off."

And away I scampered down the street after a long-legged lettle street varmint of a boy that was a rolling that pumpkin before him jest as you would a ball.

"You crazy-headed old fool!" sez Mr. Squire Jones, "let the pumpkin go to——"

And he mentioned a place that it hain't perlite to mention. I ixpected he was out of order in his liver, and I should have offered him some Clean Sweep, but I couldn't stop. I was after the pumpkin.

I run as hard as I could, but the boy was a long-legged one, and he turned down some cross street somewheres, and I lost sight of him. But pritty soon I cum in sight of a store, and there sot my pumpkin on the door-step along with three squashes, a box of sweet potatoes, and a baskit of inyons.

I grabbed it by its old familiar handle and started off, when a hand was laid on my shoulder, and a man spit out a quid of terbacker as big as a piece of chalk before he spoke, and then, sez he:

"You old thief! I've got you now. I've been watching for you over a week. Where's the tomatuses?"

"You go to pot!" sez I, "and let me alone, or you'll learn that Patience Pettigrew, relict of the late lamented Josiah, haint to be trifled with."

"Where's them tomatuses that you stole last Satturday?" sez he, grabbing my pumpkin by the handle, and trying to twist it out of my grasp.

“Tomatuses be darned?” sez I; “I hain’t seen none this year, and don’t want to, and I hain’t a thief nuther. What on airth do you mean by calling me a thief, you old rascalion, you?” and quite out of patience with everybody I hit him a lick over the head with my satchel-bag, which bust up two bottles of the Clean Sweep which the satchel contained, and the contents run down over his face in a black torrint.

“Less have that pumpkin,” sez he.

“It’s *my* pumpkin,” sez I, “and I’ll fight for it to the bitter end.”

“I’ll give you in charge,” sez he; “these sneak thieves are getting altogether too common. I’ve lost tomatuses, and carrots, and now a pumpkin. I may lose cabbage next.”

“You’ve got one cabbage head that nobody’ll ever steal,” sez I, “and that’s the one onto your shoulders.”

“Here, perlice,” sez he, calling to a thick-sot man dressed in blue, with a door-plate on his coat, “take this woman to the station and lock her up.”

“What charge?” sez the perlice.

“Stealing a pumpkin from John Gibbs,” sez the man.
“One pumpkin valued at fifty cents.”

“It is *my* own pumpkin,” sez I, as indignant as I could be; “one that I raised to Oyster Bridge, on the burnt ground lot, and that I calkerlated to give to Cousin Tom’s wife, as has got ten children, and——”

“Come along, old lady,” sez the perlice, “and step lively. My time is precious.”

“I won’t go a step,” sez I. “The idea! Me, Patience

Pettigrew, relict of the late lamented Josiah, a stealing my own pumpkin. One that I'd brung all the way from Oyster Bridge to Bosting City by its own handle. I should know it among a thousand by its shape, and the wart on the bottom of it. See here," and I turned it over in triumph, but, gracious goodness me, cum to git at the bottom of it, there wasn't no wart there. And so it couldn't be my pumpkin.

And when I made the awful discovery you could have knocked me down with a feather.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MIDNIGHT FIRE.



WAS overcome!

Did I steal that pumpkin?

Or did I not?

That was the question I asked myself over and over again.

I couldn't seem to see through it, and the only conclusion I could make was that the boy had gone right on with my pumpkin, instid of setting it down at the store door as I had supposed, and that I had stole a pumpkin from the grocery man.

So of course it naterally follered that I must be a thief.

Me, one of the pillars of the Oyster Bridge church, and a personal friend of the minister, and a teacher into the Sabbath school, arrested for thieving.

I felt so faint and discouraged like to my stummuk that I asked the perlice to let go of me a minnit while I refreshed my inner man, and I took a large draft of Clean Sweep, and felt inviggerated. Of all the things in the world that is formed for the benefit of suffering humanity, there is nothing will begin to compare with Pettigrew's Patent Purgative Clean Sweep, purely vegetable, and only one dollar a bottle. Six bottles for five dollars.

"Now, Mr. Perlice," sez I, "I'm resigned to the laws of fate and Bosting City. I give myself up, and may the Lord have mercy onto me, and not let Almiry Jane Splicer read the account in the newspapers."

And he offered me his arm, and we marched off.

They took me to the station, and locked me up into a smallish bedroom that hadn't only one winder, and smelt awful strong of onions and bad whisky.

I ixpect they was what the thief had stole that had occupied that cell afore I did.

My trial cum on the next day. I am a going to pass over all ixperience and feelings while in the fellin's cell. Part of the time I wept, and part of the time I was so mad that if there had been a cart-load of that old grocery man's pumpkins in that cell I would have busted 'em all, or perished in the attempt. I s'pose you've been mad yerself afore now, and know jest how it feels.

In the morning they brung me to trial. I felt like a fool. I hadn't no consciousness to comb my head and rig on my false hair; and as for the powder on my face, I was all of a trimble for fear it was put on in patches so's 'twould show, for I didn't have no glass and had to fix it by guess. And every woman as has tried it knows that this is no easy job.

When they called me out, I give my handkercher a swish over my face to dust it off, for I wanted to look well, even if I was on trial for stealing a pumpkin; for how did I know but what the judge, or the jury, or some of the men seet that would be present might be

impressed with the face of Patience Pettigrew, relict of the late lamented Josiah?

It hain't never best to throw away a good opportunity.

There weren't a half a dozen in the court-room. I was disappointed, and I felt as if I wished I was to home abed with the cat. A great chance I had of making an impression onto that forlorn set of men folks.

Just as they begun to call onto me to know what I had to say for myself, the door opened, and in cum Tom Smith, and his wife, and six of their children.

My cousin Thomas!

No mistake this time!

It was a reviving sight!

"We read about it in the papers, cousin Patience!" sez Tom, "and we cameat once to offer our assistance! Me, and my wife, and John Abram, and Charles Samson, and Melinda Arethusa, and William Pitt Fox, and Josephine Augusta, and Samuel Arthur! And Martha Maria, and Selina Ellinor, and Bessie Berenice, and the baby, are all outside the door waiting for the verdict! All double-named, and as fine a family as you will find in the city."

I fell onto cuzzin Tom's neck and told him my story. And his wife snivilled, and I snivilled a little, and the justice blowed his nose and remarked that it was a duse of a fuss to make over a tarnal old pumpkin, and he find me fifty cents and costs.

And Tom paid it, and we all departed in triumph.

I had a warm welcome to Tom's house, and his wife said she was just as much obleeged to me for that pumpkin as if it had got to her safely. And you'd ort to have seed the children go at them doughnuts!

That night after I went to bed I was roused up by a cry of fire on the street somewheres, some bells rang, and I jumped out of bed and dressed myself as quick as possible, and remembering that Boston was in the habit of being burnt up pretty considerably often, I grabbed my satchel-bag and other valuables, and not knowing ixactly which way the stairway was, I elim out



"I GRABBED MY SATCHEL-BAG AND CLIM OUT OF THE SCUTTLE ONTO THE ROOF."

of the scuttle onto the roof of the house, so's the firemen could see me and fly to my rescue with a ladder.

But nobody cum, and I couldn't see no fire nowheres, and nobody seemed to be a going to any fire, and I wandered round up there a spell on the roofs of the houses,

which was flat, and a row of twenty or more, and then I begun to fell chilly, and thought I'd just step inside and wait for the fire to cum along.

So I opened the scuttle noiselessly, for fear cuzzin Tom and his wife would hear me and laff at me for not being posted in the way to behave when there is a fire in Bosting City.

It was as dark as a pocket in my room when I got in there, and I smelled sumthin that seemed a great deal like cigar smoke, and I couldn't think how it should cum there, but I was too cold to bother, so I got into bed as quick as possible.

As I got in, that smell was a good deal more so, and there was a little flavor of brandy throwed in."

"Gracious Peter!" sez I, "where *does* it cum from?" and I felt round over the bed to see if there was anything wrong, and oh, my soul and body! what did my hand cum in contact with, but the long nose and bushy whiskers of a *man*!

Then cum the thought that tramps was abroad in the land, and that my life was in danger! He had cum to tie me to the cheer, and gag me, while he went through my satchel-bag and stole my ear-rings!

I sprung to me feet, and rushing to the door I screached "Murder! thieves! burglars! tramps!" as loud as I could holler.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE WRONG SCUTTLE.



ALL WAS confusion in a secont.

I heered the tramp bounce out of bed with an oath that friz my blood, and the door was flung open, and in cum a woman with a light, dressed in a yellor flannil petticoat, and a night-gound of another shade of yellor; and when she seed me her face growed as red as blood; and she sot down the light, and grabbing up a man's boot from the floor she cum at me with murder in her eye.

"I've caught you at last!" sez she, in an awful voice, to that man who was a setting onto the side of the bed rubbing his eyes, and looking from one to t'other of us as if he couldn't seem to git things through his head. "I've caught you! and I'll apply for a bill to-morrow! I'll be divorced! I'll go home to my mother! I knowed there was a reason why you left my room—*our* room—you villain, you! and cum off up here to sleep! I've knowed all along that it warn't because the dear baby's crying kept you awake! I ain't a fool! I can see a yard afore my nose! And I must say, Sam Hanson, that you've showed your taste! a leaving your own lawful wedded wife for such an old toothless hag as this!" and she let drive that cheer at my head, but as there warn't no law to compel me to stand still and take the

licks, I jest dodged to one side, and the blow fell onto the toilet set, and the broken glass flew round like hailstones!



"GRABBING UP A BOOT SHE CUM AT ME WITH MURDER IN HER EYE."

"Wall, of all the places that ever I seed," sez I, "Bosting City beats the lot for jellus women! Oyster Bridge, that I allers thought was the jellersusist place on the footstool, can't hold a candle to it! A woman has got

to be keerful how she looks at any man here, if she don't wan't her head ixploded off from her body."

"You are found in his bedroom!" sez she, histing that cheer up again.

"No I warn't!" sez I; "he was found into mine!"

"When?" sez she, biling.

"Now!" sez I.

"Gracious airth!"

"Yes!" sez I.

"You're an imperdent old hag of a jezzerbelt!" sez she, "and Sam Hanson has slept his last night under the ruff that covers me! I'm a going home to mother!"

"Hold on!" sez the man. "Mary Car'line, do calm down! If I was to be spitted and toasted alive I don't know what this means! I never set eyes on this woman before!"

"No," sez I, "I ixpect not. It was too dark when he crawled into my bedroom!"

"When *you* crawled into *my* bedroom!" sez the man.

"When *you* crawled into *my* bedroom!" sez I, in a voice of thunder, "crawled in with the kalkerlation of garrotting me, and committing manslaughter and treason onto me, and then robbing my satchel-bag of that eight dollars that is in there, and pilfairing my earrings!"

"Woman alive!" sez he, "be you insane?"

"I dunno!" sez I, "I was all right when I left Oyster Bridge ten days ago, but these ere doings in Bosting City kinder onbalance my brains! I shouldn't wonder if

I got into the crazytick horsepittle before long if I should stay here!"

"What are you here for?" says the man, preparing for to git into some more clothes, which was a very nice purseeding on his part, I thought.

"What are *you here* for?" sez I. "That's the question, it seems to me."

"I've been asked," sez he.

"So have I," sez I.

"And you clim' in at the scuttle into my room," sez he.

"No," sez I, "you clim' in at the scuttle into *my* room."

"And you was both into the same room!" sez the woman in the yaller night-gound. "Oh, dear! dear! dear! And I the wife of his bosom and the mother of his baby! Oh, that I had never been born!"

"Well, now," sez I, "I don't understand no more about this than an onborn child would; and what I want to know is, how cum this man into my room and into my bed?"

"Into your bed!" sez he. "Lord preserve us! Mary Car'line, she's out of her reasons!"

"I shall be into 'em, soon, if you don't stop fooling!" sez I. "I'll have this man critter afore the perlice, and I'll call up Tom, and Ann Jane, and their ten children, for witnesses!" And I went to the door and yelled as loud as ever I could for Ann Jane and Tom.

"Now look here!" sez the man, who had got into his wardrobe and looked quite respectable compared to what

he did. "Let's git at the gist of this matter. Who are you?"

"I am Patience Pettigrew, relict of the late lamented Josiah," sez I. "And I'm here in Bosting city to sell my Clean Sweep, which is warranted to clean the cistern and the digestic orgins of all onpurity, or the money refunded."

"But how cum you *here*?" sez the man.

"How cum *you* here?" sez I.

"I live here! This is my house," sez he.

"*Our* house!" sez his wife. "I paid five hundred dollars toward it, and I wish—I wish—it—had been burnt—up—up—in the fire a thousand times before—that—that—miserable, onfaithful Sam Hanson had ever seed the color of it—so there!" And she stamped her foot angrily, and bust out a boo-hooing.

"*You* live here!" sez I. "That can't be, for Tom lives here!"

"Tom who?" sez he.

"Cuzzin Tom Smith," sez I.

The man began to laff.

"Mary Car'line," sez he, "it must be her. It's the woman that traveled a hundred miles in the cars with a pumpkin tied up in a handkercher. She's a visiting at Tom Smith's, next door."

"This is Tom Smith's!" sez I.

"No," sez the man, "Tom lives next door. The fact is, old lady, you got into the wrong scuttle."

I stood still and thought it over a minnit, and I knowed it must be so.

“Well,” sez I, “I vow to man if I don’t believe you’ve jest hit it!”

“Oh, Sammy!” sez his wife, throwing up them yaller night-gound arms, “forgive me—forgive me for doubting you! Oh, my love! my darling! my dear little innocent hubby! my ownest own!” And she grabbed him round the neck and held on till his face was as purple as an Isabella grape-skin!

CHAPTER XX.

PATIENCE GOES INTO BUSINESS.



WHEN I diskivered my mistake, I felt pritty flat, I can tell you, but these people were forgiving angels, both of 'em, and they fixed themselves up, and esquarted me to Cuzzin Tom's frunt door; where I had the pleasure of giving 'em each a bottle of Clean Sweep, with my best respects.

Tom's folks had cornsiderable to say, but that's neither here nor there.

Next day I went into bizness. I hired a peanut-stand, and arranged my Clean Sweep onto it. Everybody cum crowding round, and in the forenoon I sold fifty bottles of it; and still trade was brisk. About noon I felt hungry, and thought I'd go summers and git some dinner. There was a real good-looking man a standing cluss by my stand, as if he was waiting for a job. I asked him if he would stay by and mind my stand for fifty cents, while I went after my dinner; and he sed he should be delighted to mind it for nothing.

How gentlemanly these Boston men folks is! Every one of 'em as polite as dancing-school masters.

I left him to mind the stand, and I went to an ister place and wrastled with a bowl of stewed isters. I hadn't never eat any of them animiles before, and it was dreadful tough bizness to swaller one of 'em whole,

and feel his toe-nails a tickling of your swaller as he went down, but I'd cum to the city determined to see the elephant clean through, and I meant to be able to tell Almiry Jane Splicer when I got home that I'd seen all the sights from Bunker Hill Monument to a bowl of isters.

As soon as I got through I traveled for my peanut-stand, but, my soul and body! when I got there it wasn't there! It was wiped intirely out of ixistence!

No stand! no Clean Sweep bottles! no gentlemanly Boston man a watching! No nothing!

I was transfiggered with amazement.

A one-armed organ-grinder occupied the ground, and was a grinding out "Hail Columbus," as fast as he could grind.

"Look here, my man!" sez I, "where's them bottles?"

He took off his cap, and hild it out to me, and kept on a grinding.

"Thank ye!" sez I, "'taint the cap I want. I've got a hat, and a bunnit, too, to home. I want my bottles?"

He stopped grinding, and put his hand into his pocket, and passed me out a bottle. A flat bottle about half-full of sumthin'. I smelt of it, and I vow it was whisky.

"Help yourself!" sez he, "and welcome!"

I was as mad as a hatter! Offering whisky to me which was the female president of the Sons of Temperance at Oyster Bridge, and never drinks nothing stronger

than new cider, and vinegar, which is good for rebelliousness."

I give that whisky bottle a hist that sent it whizzing into the air, and when it cun down it onfortinitly selected the glossy beaver of a young swell as was walking along with his eye-glasses on, sucking the head of his cane.

The hat was squelched, the bottle bust, the whisky poured in a flood down his stylish Boston nose, and he fell to the sidewalk a yelling murder enuff to raise the dead.

"I've been struck over the head with a club!" sez he. "The blood is all a running down my forehead! Somebody secure the rascal! Fifty dollars reward for the one that did it!"

"Here she is," sez the orgin-grinder man, grabbing me by the shoulder and dragging of me forrud, and my goodness! when I looked at him I seed that a merrycle had been performed onto him, for the arm he had lost jumped rite into his empty coat sleeve, and he had two as good arms as ennybody.

"Let me alone!" sez I, "or you'll wish you'd never come into this vale of sin and sorrer. I hain't done nothing but smash a whisky bottle, and if I had the chance, I'd smash every one of 'em in the United States and Canadas!"

"Perlice! perlice!" yelled the young swell at the top of his lungs.

"Perlice!" yelled the orgin-grinder, jest about as hard.

"STOP!" SEZ I. "STOP RITE WHERE YOU BE! THEN'S MY CLEAN SWEEP!"



"Consarn the hull of ye!" sez I. "I wish to gracious I'd staid to hum, and dried apples this fall, instid of coming to this Babylon of wickedness!" And jest then I spied somebody going round a corner with a hand-cart load of bottles. Drowning men will ketch at straws, and I ketched at that one to once. It must be my Clean Sweep bottles.

I broke away from the orgin-grinder without stopping to apologize, and ran as hard as ever I could after that hand-cart. I knocked over a small boy, and upset an old apple-woman, baskit and all, and nigh about caused a dignified old man, with a law book under his arm and an ambrill over his shoulder, to lose his balances; but I reached the hand-cart at last, and seized onto the driver, which was likewise the hoss as well.

"Stop!" sez I; "stop rite where you be! Them's my Clean Sweep!"

"What in the dickens do you mean, old woman?" sez the man, stopping short in his tracks, and gazing at me as if he never seed anybody before. "Did you want to buy a bottle of beer?"

"Beer!" sez I; "the land sakes no! Who sed anything about beer, I wonder?"

"It's only ten cents a bottle," sez he; "best white root. Have a bottle?"

"Land of compassion, no!" sez I. "What does ail you Boston city folks that you think I want to drink the vile stuff that doth intoxicate? Fust it was whisky, and now it is beer?"

"Yes, I should judge so, from the looks of that nose

of yourn," sez he. "Noses don't lie, and 'taint often you see one shine like that are when there hain't some cause for it. Whisky's done it."

"You lie!" sez I, mad as I could be and not bust. "I'm a thurrer-going temperance woman clean to the back bone, and don't never take nothing stronger than vinegar for my indigestion, and Clean Sweep for my liver. And I want you to deliver over them bottles as you stole."

"Stole!" sez he.

"Yes, stole!" sez I.

"Land o' Goshen!" sez he, "the woman is crazy!"

"I hain't; but I soon shall be," sez I, "if I stay in this place. The way things goes on is enuff to drive anybody into the tantrum conniptions. Deliver over them bottles if you know what is good for ye."

"You go to grass!" sez he.

"None of yer sass!" sez I, "or I'll do what everybody else here does the minnit there's any trouble—I'll holler for the perlice."

"I'll give you in charge, and have you sent to the asylum," sez he. "I ain't a going to be bothered in my bizness by any old woman like you."

And jest then I put on my specks, and looked elussly at them bottles, and lawful heart! they wasn't mine. They was marked "Beer," and held a pint a piece more'n mine!

CHAPTER XXI.

OLD-FELLER AND DESDY-MONEY.



WHEN I found out that I'd been took in agin, I had to apologize, and the man sed he'd settle for fifty cents.

We had some words about it, during which I broke several bottles of his beer, and had to pay five dollars or go to the station.

Boston city is a curis place.

My Clean Sweep was lost intirely, and there was nothing for me to do but to bear it with cumposur.

Losses will take place in any bizziness, and in Patience Pettigrew's especially.

I took a hollyday, and tellegrafted home for Seeze to send me five hundred dozen of Clean Sweep by the next mail.

Cuzzin Tom and his wife invited me to go to the theater with 'em that night. There was going to be a play called "Old-feller and Desdy-money," they sed. Powerful performance, and I should be awfully sot up by it.

I dressed myself in my best, and we went. Did ever you see the inside of a theater? It's a dreadful wicked place, Parson Prime sez, and anybody can't go there right along without gitting to be good friends with the adverserry, as he ixpresses it. But I thought going

once wouldn't ruin me, and I thought more of making Almiry Jane Spieer's eyes stick out when I got home than I did of anything else.

That theater was a very stylish bilding. It was considerable bigger than the Oyster Bridge skule-house, and the seats was got up on the same plan, one above t'other, with the floor lower at one end of the room than it was to the t'other, only in the skule-house the floor rises one way, and in the theater it rises t'other.

There was a sight of folks there, all drest up fit to kill, and there was siveril fellers tooting onto fiddles and things, and a big pieter hung up rite in frunt of 'em, with a row of lamps rite on the floor.

"Why don't they take them lamps up?" sez I, in a whisper to Ann Jane. "They'll set that pieter afire, next thing."

She told me to hush up, and just then a bell rung.

"I guess dinner is reddy summers," sez I, "or mebbby its supper. Do you have to pay extry for that?"

Ann Jane told me to hush, agin, and offered me her bowkay to smell of. But there was heelyourtroops into it, and that allers makes me sick to my stummuk, so I declined with thanks.

Jest then that bell rung agin, and that pieter begun for to roll up from the top, and I seed a platform, with more picters behind it, and people traveling round in frunt of 'em.

They went on cutting up all sorts of didoes, and there was a real pritty woman that they called Desdy-money, and she married a man that was blaek, and named Old-feller.

It kind of appeared as if he got jellus of her, and she went to bed one night and he sot out for to kill her.

He stood there a talking of it over, and looking as blood-thirsty as ever you seed a calf-butcher.

"Now, look here, Ann Jane," sez I, "I want to know if the people are going to set here and let that nigger man kill that onoffensive woman for nothing more than because he can't find an old pockithandkercher, which is jest as likely to be out on the clothes-line as anywheres elses?"

"Do keep still, Patience," sez she; "don't you see you are attracting the observation of the audience."

"Darn the ordience and their observations, too!" sez I, "when a human critter's life is at stake. Why, I should be wuss than a murderer if I sot here and seed him smudder her with that bolster. It would be ekal to them carving-knife murders up in the State of New Hampshire."

Jest then the Old-feller prepaired for to put the piller over her face, and jest then I leaped from my seat and clim rite over the pianny-forty onto the stage, and grabbed that piller from his hand, and hit him a whack over the head with it that tore his hair rite off from his scalp, and translated him from a black-headed man into a red-head, and there was a white rim round his forrned that looked like sunrise on a cloudy day.

Desdy-money jumped up out of bed and flew at me with the tother piller, and Old-feller he begun for to swear and shake his fists at me in a terrible way.

"Perlice! perlice!" yelled I, jest as Boston city folks



"I CLIM RITE OVER THE PIANNY-FORTY ONTO THE STAGE, AND GRABBED THAT PILLER FROM HIS HAND AND HIT HIM A WHACK OVER THE HEAD WITH IT THAT TORE HIS HAIR RITE OFF FROM HIS SKALP."

does when there's anything don't go to suit them. "He set out for to murder her, and it hain't Patience Pettigrew, relict of the late lamented Josiah, as would set idly by and see him do it."

"Go it, Patience!" yelled the ordience. "Freeze to him! He deserves it! Don't let him escape!"

"No," sez I; "not if I perish in the attempt!"

Old-feller was mad, and he took me by the shoulders and shook me so that I felt my upper set a gitting down into my throat, and that riz my indignation. Right on one side of us was a open door, or sumthin' that looked like one, and I dragged him toward it, and give him a hist, and lawful goodness! down he went, and down I went, rite into a room where there was a lot of wimmin fixing their hair and tinkering generally.

They all screeched together, and Old-feller he rubbed his shins and told them I was a confounded old fool who ought to be shut up in a madhouse.

And Tom, and Ann Jane, and another man cum and marched me off, and Ann Jane she give me the awfullest going over after we got home that ever you seed.

She sed it was only a play, and Old-feller was only in fun, and she sed I was a fool, and the whole thing would be into the papers, and she and Tom would be laffed at, and then she ondid her back hair and sot down into a rocking-chair and cried like a baby.

I offered her some Clean Sweep to take, to carm her narves, but she knocked the bottle out of my hands and made an awful mess on the carpit.

How I do hate to see folks get mad at nothing.

That night I made up my mind to do sumthin'. Boston City warn't the place for me, that was sartin, and I determined to go to Europe.

To Europe, and peddle Clean Sweep.

And make my fortin.

Next week I sail. My next will, in all probberbility, be written on the briny deep. Till then, adew.

Oh, a life on the oshun wave for me,
To see the lobsters swim,
And to watch the little crabs skip round,
When daylight's kinder dim ;
To hear the gallant sailors sing
As they reef the flowing sail,
And see the ship dance merrily on
Before the favoring gale!

That's what Patience Pettigrew, relict of the late lamented Josiah, intends to do.

CHAPTER XXII.

PATIENCE MEETS WITH A CATASTROPHY.



MY VOYAGE is begun. It has been begun three days and four nights. I'm out on the oshun sailing—that's what I'm about.

How do I like it? Well I can't say as I'm likely to hanker arter it any more. It don't agree with my stummuk, and all the vittles I've eat for the past three days has been as good as hove away. They hain't stayed where they was ixedted to.

A dollar a day gone to wrack and ruin! If the vittles had been of a better quality I should have felt wusser about 'em; but they warn't much but corned beef and hard tack, with now and then a piece of dried apple pie throwed in.

I'm the only *young* woman there is on board the ship. I call myself thirty-two, now. I've put my age back some, because shipwrecks is so common now that I want to be prepared for it, and if I should be buried in the sea I don't want to see my age reported in the newspapers as any more than thirty-five; and I hope all the papers will take notice accordingly.

There are lots of people on board the North Pole a going to Europe, and most of 'em has to do sumthin' for their cisterns. The old ocean seems to turn us all inside

outards. I have peddled out lots of Clean Sweep already, and have got to be called Mrs. Dr. Pettigrew.

The captain is very perlite to me, and has told me all about his fust wife, and how she eloped with a Morman man as already had sixteen bosom pardners, and I've



"NATERALLY I MADE A GRAB AT THE FUST THING THAT OFFERED, WHICH ONFORTINITLY HAPPENED TO BE THE LEG OF A VERY FAT WOMAN, AS WAS A HANGING OUT OF ONE OF THE BERTHS."

sympertized with him as much as was proper, considering as he's got another wife and eleven children in New Jersey.

Last night I met with a catastrophe. I give up my state-room to a woman as was sick, and I went to sleep

in the ginral cabin. It's a crowded up place, and my berth was up four or five above the bottom, and I hain't so springy as I used to be.

I made several attempts to git up afore I succeeded; and as I reached the right place and was going for to turn in, my foot slipped and I lost my balances, and went downwards. Naterally I made a grab at the fust thing' that offered, which onfortinitly happened to be the leg of a very fat woman, as was a hanging out of one of the berths below.

She screech'd and yelled enuff to split the universe, if we'd only been on to it anywheres instead of out to sea. I didn't want to make no disturbances nor hard feelings, so I jest let go of her leg and crept into the fust berth I cum to, while she was still a howling.

There was somebody into it, snoring away at a high-pressure rate, and I got down under the quilt and kept still.

In about a minnit everybody was onto their feet, a rushing hither and yon, and yelling like lunaticks.

"Ship's on fire!"

"No; sprung a leak!"

"Collision!"

"Biler busted!"

"Blowed up!"

"Pirates!"

"Sunken rocks!"

"Sea serpent!"

"Oh, Lordy!"

These was the exclamations, about seven dozen of a kind, all screeched out together.

Captain Beck appeared on the scene, holding up his trouserloons with one hand, and flourishing his speaking-trumpet in t'other.

“Be carm!” sez he. “Let every man do his duty! Drat the women! Why couldn’t they have been made without that yelling apparatus that all of ’em’s got? Furl the mainsail! Slow the ingine! Put her round! Pump her out! Stand ready with buckets to squelch the fire! Thunderation! if I know what to order till I know what’s the matter!”

“It’s her sperit!” gasped the fat woman, setting up in her berth, and glaring round her as if she ixpected to see suthin’ mighty oncommon rite beside her.

“Sperit!” sez the captain. “Who’s been afoul of the sperits? I’ll court-martial him, and hang him to the yard-arm! Shiver me if I don’t!”

“Oh, ’tain’t that!” sez the fat woman. “It’s a sperit—a disembodied sperit! From the other world! An angel flying through the realms of infinite space——”

“What in blazes do you mean?” roared the captain.

“It took me by the—the lower limb,” sez the woman, “and the hand was as dead and cold as a corpuses!”

“Angels round a grabbing folks by the legs!” sez the captain. “Wall, that beats me! Never heerd of such a thing in my life! I’ll call the mate and see if he knows any such angels!”

“Don’t make light of it!” sez the woman. “I am a mejuim, and I converse with the beings of the unseen world! ’Twas the sperit of my fust husband!”

Sailors are dreadful supersticious critters, as you’ve

no doubt heerd sed, and while the fat woman was a talking about sperits they all begun for to look curis, and kinder fall back, and it warn't more'n two minutes afore every one of 'em was among the missing.

The captain he took after 'em, but they had all gone into the cook's place and fastened themselves in, and one of 'em told the captain through the keyhole that they might as well give up, for a ship as had sperits on it was doomed!

"Darnation take the old woman!" sez the captain. "I'll wager it was nothing but a cockroach bit her!"

"Help! murder! thieves!" yelled out the sharp voice of the woman I was laying beside of and who had jest waked up, and felt over on my face with a hand that smelled like a pound package of yeller snuff! "Help, or I'm a dead man!"

"Whose got a bite now?" growled the captain, driving his legs into his trousers so far that the legs of the aforesed garments was nigh about up to the calves of his blue stockings.

"Here! here!" screeched the woman beside me.

"Do shet up!" sez I. "I hain't a man!"

"Yes you be!" shrieked she. "I felt your chin and there's beard onto it!"

"Gracious airth!" sez I. "I've noticed that I was a little inclined that way, but it can't be possible it has cum to this! Turned into a man in one night!"

And as I thought it over, you might have knocked me down with a scratched match!

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SEA-SARPINT.



WHY IT IS that some female women, when they git along about to my age, should go to having beard onto their chins and upper lips, is what I don't understand, unless it be that the longer a woman lives the more she wants for to be a man.

Anyhow, I know it's terrible aggeravating, and I've used the tweezers onto my face for the past three year as regerlerly as I've used soap and water. I was very well aware that I had a mustache, but I hated to be told of it afore all them folks.

A body likes to keep something secret.

But seeing as 'twas made public, I thought it was best to put a bold face on the matter.

"Jest you hold easy where you be," sez I, "and I'll git up, and you'll see that you're a leetle mistook. 'Tain't so much to be wondered at that you should be deceived, seeing as you're an old maid."

The captin helped me down, and I iexplained matters, and he made a speech to the men, and carmed 'em down.

Who would ever have thought there would have been such a row all from my grabbing holt of one of a fat woman's understandings?

Verily, it is true that

"Tall oaks from little acorns grow."

I had read a sight of novels before I embarked onto the briny deep, and a good many of them told about men and women being picked up to sea in open boats, jest as they was on the pint of starvation, and had eat up all their wicked companions. So, naturally enuff, I ixpected to see a good many open boats, with shipwrecked folks in 'em, in going so fur as Europe. I used to set on the deck and look out for 'em, but they never seemed to git into the path of the North Pole.

One day I seed one, or thought I did. I had on my glasses, and I seed it quite a distance off, a floating on the water.

I called Captin Beck, and he thought so, too.

“Shall git my name into the papers,” sez he, rubbing his hands, “if it should prove to be somebody as has been shipwrecked. I hope they’ve eaten somebody—that makes it sound more desprit. It would be a bigger thing altogether. And if it should so turn out, ma’am, you shall share the honors with me.” And he teched his tarpaulin to me, and went forrud to look at *our* open boat.

I hain’t very romantic, but I couldn’t help thinking what if there *should* be a man in that boat, and a single man at that—a widower, or a batcheldore—and I should nuss him back to health and sperits with mustard plasters and Clean Sweep, and he should be grateful, and want to show me his grattytude by leading me to the hymeneal altar, would it be best for me to consent?

And my heart responded that it would.

As the boat cum nearer, it wasn’t a boat, but sum-

thin' else. A great black consarn that sot up out of the water like a house with a sullen kitchen underneath.

"Bust me!" sez the captin, "if it hain't the sea-sarpint, and we're goners now, for sartin!"

"Sea-sarpint to windard!" sung out a man that was on the lookout, and in a minnit the news had spread all over the steamboat, and everybody knowed that the North Pole was in danger of being busted up by the sea-sarpint.

I writ my will in haste, and sealed it up into an empty Clean Sweep bottle, and committed it to the briny. If anybody finds it they needn't save it, for it hain't of no partickerlar consequence, seeing as I'm still alive, and don't want to will nothing to nobody.

My will read thusly:

"I give my farrer cow to Widder Griffin.

"All them kiverlids in the attic closet to Priscilly.

"My back hair, if my body goes ashore, to Ann Billings.

"My long-legged rubber boots, and my specks, to Glory Maria Mason—she that was a Hodgkins.

"Two striped petticoats to 'Siah Jones' wife.

"A soapstone, and my corn-popper, to old Uncle Joe Gillis.

"My red rooster, and two ginny hens, to the St. Paul Church at Oyster Bridge.

"The same number of fowls to the St. Stephen Church, same place.

"All the rest to Seeze and Tommy.

"Respectfully yours,

"PATIENCE PETTIGREW."

Jest as I'd got my will writ and sot afloat, Elder Bangs, as was a going to Europe for his health, and had got a leave of absence because he'd kinder been too gossipy with some of his flock, perposed prayer.

He sed we was in grate danger, and if the sarpint should get underneath that North Pole he would hist us all into eternity in the twinkling of an eye.

Everybody bekum awful pious rite off. That sarpint had as much effect onto us as a full-grown thunder-shower. I've allers noticed that the majority of folks is more religious when it thunders than they are any other time of year, and that sea-sarpint had the same benign influence.

Just as Elder Bangs was a going for to hold fourth, the captain dropped the glass that he had been a squinting through, and roared out:

"Jerusalem alive! It's nothing but an old log! Sold! by mighty!"

And in less than two seconds, every one of them kneelers was on his feet again, and in five minutes the most of 'em was playing keerds, and drinking hot sling.

Sich is life!

Toward night, my seasickness begun for to cum on

agin, and I would have sold out my partnership in life for twenty-five cents. My head went round and round one way, and my body round and round another way, and my stummak kept on kicking round, independent of 'em all. Everything and everybody was a whirling, and about once a minute the deck of the North Pole



"I STOOD LEANING OVER THE SIDE, A GIVING THE FRESH CODFISH I'D EAT BACK TO ITS NATIVE ELEMENTS."

would fly rite up and nigh about strike me on the face, and then back it would go agin, and git ready for another hist.

I stood leaning over the side of her, a giving the fresh codfish I'd eat for dinner back to its native elements, when all to, once that ship give a bounce, and I went over head fustest into the raging deep!

“Man overboard!” sez I, in my screachiest tone of voice, and then the salt water poured into my mouth, and choked me into silence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RESCUED AND MARRIED.



IT IS a very different thing to read about folks a floating in the briny deep, and to be yourself the floater. I had much rather be onto dry land myself.

And it seemed to me that them folks on the North Pole didn't make so much effort to git me on board as they'd ort to, considering what I'd did for 'em with my Clean Sweep.

Suddintly, jest as I felt myself a going downwards, something seized onto me, and a strange voice sed, "Currage, I am here!" And then the next thing I knowed I didn't know anything. This lasted for some time, and when I cum to myself I was in the state-room of a strange boat, and there was two women and a man a standing over me.

I sot up in bed, and felt to see if my shinyon had been washed away, for no matter how big a strait a woman is in she don't like to feel that people is looking at her and her false hair gone. I don't know of a more distressing object than that are.

But, thank fortin! my hair was all there ixcept the comb, and as that only cost twenty-five cents I thought it warn't wuth while to take on about it. I shouldn't wonder if some mermaid has got it now to hold up her sea-weed tresses.

"Where am I?" sez I.

"You are right here," sez the man, "safe and sound."

"Yes," sez I, "I know I'm *here*; but where is this?"

"This is the steamer Blazing Star, and bound for New York," sez he. "We sighted you, and picked you up just in season to save you from a watery grave."

"I'm much obleeged to you," sez I, squeezing his hand, and both the women give me their hands, and I squeezed them, too, though I must say I hated to, for it seems like throwing things away for one woman to waste gratitude on another woman.

"You're quite welcome," sez he. "I am always happy to be of service to the ladies, and more especially to a lady as charming as yourself," and he bowed so low that I seed he had a bald place onto his head almost the size of an old-fashioned silver watch, and jest about as shiny. I hain't the only bald-headed person in the world, not by a long chalk.

"What might your name be?" sez I.

"It is Josiah Pettitone," sez he.

"Goodness gracious!" sez I; "how like to Josiah Pettigrew!"

"Who is he?" sez Mr. Pettitone.

"My husband," sez I.

"Your husband!" sez he, and his countenance fell.

"I was in hopes, ma'am, that—that you were a——"

"So I am," sez I; "I am a lone widder woman, and my late lamented has been in his honored grave so long that the grass is growing green over it, or would be if it was the right time of year," and I put my handkercher

to my eyes and sithed, as it is allers a widder's duty to do when her husband is spoke of.

Mr. Pettitone sithed, too, and so did the two women, which was his two widdered sisters, as I afterward found



"HE SED THAT HE HAD NEVER MET WITH NOBODY THAT COMES SO NIGH HIS BOW IGEAL AS I DID—AND HE PERPOSED TO ME RIGHT THERE."

out; and take it all together, we had a sitheing time of it. It was very affecting.

After a spell we come out of it, and talked matters over. Mr. Pettitone lived in New York, and was a dreadful rich man, and he wanted a wife. That was the amount of it.

And he sed that in all his wanderings he had never met with nobody that come so nigh his bow igeal, as I did!

And his two sisters sed so, too.

He perposed to me right there, and his sisters sed they wanted me to, and I slept on it one night and give my consent!

I'm jest moving into my new house, and am terrible busy, or else I'd give you a description of the wedding which was performed on board the Blazing Star by a minister as had been to Europe for his liver.

It was a very festive occasion, and everybody was happy.

Mr. Pettitone is all that I could desire in a husband, and his name being so nigh like my fust husband's makes a use for all the fust Josiah's shirts and stockings, which has been laid by a doing nobody good, and which I have lamented over time and agin.

I don't suppose I shall have much time to write now, for Josiah second sez he shall have a good deal of company to entertain, and he'll need my services. And I shan't make no more Clean Sweep till further notice. So good-by.

PATIENCE PETTIGREW PETTITONE.

P. S.—They sed that when Almiry Jane Splicer heerd of my marriage she cried herself into the rebellious colic, and was sick a week!

P. P. P.

THE END.

ADVENTURES OF AN OLD MAID.

THE OLD MAID GOES TO BOSTON AND RIDES WITH THE COAL-MAN.

While I was visitin' my niece, she that was Araminty Smith, I took a notion I'd go to Boston. It wa'n't only a couple of hours' ride in the cars, and I had some shoppin' I wanted to dew. There was several things I wanted to git; a new cloak for one thing. You see, I'd wore my cloak goin' on seven year, and mother'd give me the money a purpose to buy me a harnsome one. Then I meant to git some little presents for the children; they don't keep much 'sortment in Crabtown.

Wall, I didn't meet with no accidents on the way, and got into town quite early in the forenoon.

I thought I'd buy the presents for the children fust, so I went to one or two big toy-shops, where I fooled away more money than I dare to tell on; though I found out my extravagance wa'n't nothin' compared to some o' them rich folks'es. They'd hand out their fifteen or twenty dollars for them toy things, and drive away in their kerridges as carm as you please. Lawful cakes! but don't it seem downright wicked to throw

away money so, when lots o' folks are sufferin' for bread to eat !

I was pretty busy till long after my usual dinner time, and I begun to feel tired and faint, so I looked up a place where I thought I could git a comfortable meal o' vittles and went in and set down. As long as I didn't come to Boston every day, I meant to have a nice dinner and take my time eatin' it, so's to git a good rest. I took up the book on the table that tells what you can have and how much to pay for each thing, and begun to look it over.

Pretty soon up steps a tidy-lookin' young girl and says to me,

"What'll you have to-day, madam?" says she.

"Wall, I dunno," says I, smilin'; "I hain't read the book through yet, and hain't made up my mind."

She says, "To-day is Friday, and you can have any kind o' fish—we have biled dish, too; biled dish twenty cents," and she pinte it out to me on the book.

"Lawful sakes!" says I, "dew tell if you have biled dish here! Ketch me eatin' biled dish in Boston! I can git plenty o' that to home!" and I laughed well.

She laughed too, but I thought I wouldn't hinder her no longer, so I said,

"Wall, now you're here, I might as well settle onto somethin'; sposin' I have a "*Charlotte Russe*?" I couldn't pronounce it, but I pinte it out to her!

"Oh yes," said she, "but what else?"

"Wall," said I, "that depends on how big a 'Charlotte what-ye-may-call-it is. If it's as big as a biled dish, I shan't want much of anything else, only a cup o' tea or so."

"But, madam," said she, "Charlotte *Roosh* is a desert dish—sort of a cake—ye know, and ladies generally want somethin' else fust at dinner."

"Is that so?" said I. Wall, then, give me some 'lobster salad'—I s'pose that's made out o' lobster, and I'm awful fond of lobster; and—wall, I don't see it on the book—but can't ye give me a pertater, and a slice o' cold meat to go with it, for substanshul, ye know? Them other things I want ter try, jest to see what they be. Oh, and give me a good strong cup o' Young Hyson, won't ye? That'll rest me more'n anything else."

She seemed like a real good-natered girl; she went off smilin', and it wa'n't long 'fore she brought all the things, and they was nice too, though I must say I didn't think that '*Charlotte Roosh*' thing was any great shakes, after all. Nothin' in the world but cake with custard inside on't.

But, on the whole, I had a good dinner and felt the better for 't. I told the girl where I lived when I was to home, and asked her to call and see me if she ever come my way, and she said she would. I got everything I meant to buy before dinner, all but my cloak, and I thought I'd go to Holton and Maxey's for that. They'd jest had their store all repaired over, and I knew it would be wuth seein'.

Wall, I went in and looked round a spell down stairs, then I asked a clerk to show me where I

could find a harnsome cloak. He pinto to some stairs, and I went up 'em, and come to another floor where there was a number of different rooms. The fust was a bunnit room, and I got quite interested seein' the ladies try on bunnits; sech harnsome ones they was! But they don't let ye alone long in them stores, and pretty soon a girl comes up and says to me, "Do you wish to look at bunnits?"

"No, I don't," says I. "I want to buy me a cloak, if you've got any." She pinto ahead to another room and I passed on. That room was full o' dresses, all made. Some on 'em was stunnin' tew. I tell ye I felt kinder out o' place in my clo'es; they seemed so different, somehow.

Wall, I went through a good many rooms in this way, but I didn't see no signs of any cloaks, and I begun to git tired and out o' patience. Finally, I walks up to a man and says I,

"Mister, I've been handed round from pillar to post 'bout long enough; now, if there's any place here where I can buy a cloak, I'll be obleeged to ye if you'll show me right where 'tis."

He pinto ahead, as all the rest had done, and says he, "Fust door to the right."

I found a little room all furnished nice like a parlor, and not a livin' soul in it. I s'posed the cloak room must be nigh, but I thought I'd set down and rest a minute, and I declare, if I didn't drop to sleep! And the fust thing I knew a young lady was shakin' me by the arm like all possesst. I opened my eyes, and when I'd come to my senses a little I spoke up, and says I,

"Young woman, don't be so rough. I didn't mean to go to sleep in here; but there ain't no harm done, I guess."

"This isn't the lady's waitin'-room, I'd have ye know," says she, short as pie-crust.

"I'm glad to hear it," says I, "for I begun ter think they was all waitin'-rooms, and I've waited long enough. I wan' ter see some cloaks now, and I want you to show 'em to me."

So she did, and I got me a beauty, at a bargain tew, but it took every cent o' money I had left. I didn't care as long's I had my return ticket all right, and I felt as if I'd spent enough for one day—more'n what I ought ter.

When I come out o' Holton and Maxey's, I looked at the clock and it said quarter of five, and the train left at five o'clock. "No time to spare," thinks I to myself. "Goodness gracious me, what if I should git left! What would become o' me, here all alone in this great city, without a cent o' money to pay for a night's lodgin'?"

I looked up street for an omnibus or car, but I declare for't, if they wa'n't every one on 'em goin' the wrong way! I begun to feel narvous, I tell ye. I asked a perliceman what I should dew, and he said, "Wall, mum, you could take a coach." But there wa'n't no coaches—nothin' but omnibuses and cars, and, as I said afore, all goin' the wrong way. I started and run as fast as I could with my arms full o' bundles, jogglin' in and out among the crowd, sometimes on the sidewalk and sometimes in the road. I kep' an eye out, hopin' every minute that some kind of a wagon might come along that would take me in.

Wall, I run and run, till I got somewheres near the place to turn off Washin'ton Street, and then I inquired the way and struggled on, pantin' and out o' breath. Finally, when I was clean beat out, and was makin' up my mind to go back and ask a perliceman to take me to the lobby and lock me up safe for the night, I spied a man on a coal-cart joggin' along peaceful as could be behind an old white horse, and lookin' as if he wa'n't in any hurry if the rest o' the world was.

I didn't stop to think all this then, though, you'd better believe, but I rushed right out inter the street, front of him, as he come up, and waved my bundles and swung my umbrell' round like mad!

The old horse stopped short of his own accord, and the man on the seat dropped his hands in his lap, and opened his mouth and stared at me, but he never said a word.

I clambered up onto the seat beside of him, as well as I could, alone—he didn't lift a finger to help me—and grabbed the reins and whipped up the old horse into a smart gallop.

Then the man seemed to come to his senses a little. He took the reins away from me and made as if he was goin' to stop.

"Old lady," says he, "you git out o' this."

"Oh, no; I can't," says I, givin' the old horse a crack with the whip that made her jump so that we both almost fell over back'ards into the cart. "Oh no," says I, "I must git to the depot, and you must take me there!"

I looked him right in the face an appealed to his feelin's. (He was a good, honest-lookin'

feller.) "Young man," said I, "have you a mother?" Then I told him my perdicckment and all about it, as well as I could for the jouncin' up and down, and the holdin' on. You see the seat wa'n't nothin' but a loose board laid acrost the top o' the cart, and I was in mortal fear o' my life every minute. And oh, the noise we made rattlin' over the stunny pavements in that empty cart! A whole Fourth o' July slam-bang company wouldn't a been a circumstance tew it! Howsomever, I said to him as loud's I could scream, and he seemed to sense it, "I am left here alone in this strange city, and if you'll get me to the five-o'clock train in season (it's the last train I can go on) you shall be rewarded, amply rewarded, young man!" It takes a good while to tell this, but it all happened in less than fifteen minutes; for we drove up to the depot jest in season, and not one minute tew soon nuther. The bell was ringin' and the train was on the pint o' startin'.

I took out my puss and—wall—then it all come over me in a flash how I had swindled that young man.

"I don't s'pose you'll believe it," I gasped out, "but I forgot—actewally forgot—that I hadn't a cent o' money left! Your address—your name, and where do you live? I will send the money!"

He seemed stunned agin jest as he was at fust; and I, feelin' that I hadn't a second to lose, run for the cars, and he started after me, though he hadn't spoke a word.

Jest as the conductor was haulin' me up onto

the platform (for the train was startin'), he found his voice and yelled out a name, and street, and number; and I heard it as plain as I ever heard anything in my life, and I sollemly meant to remember it, and send him a harnsome present as quick as I got home; but the conductor spoke to me ruther sharp, asked me if I wa'n't ashamed o' myself "gittin' onter the cars in that shape, and runnin' such resks?" And I had ter explain tew him that I was anxious to go on that train, for certain reasons, and so on. The minute he left me, I got out my pencil to write down that address, and as I'm a livin' woman I couldn't remember the fust word on't! I tried and tried, but it wa'n't no kind o' use; and I never have been able ter recall it from that day to this!

I hain't been to Boston sence, but I believe I shall go a purpose to hunt up that poor young man. I should know him anywheres the minute I set eyes on him.

THE MIND CURE.

Of all the cures that ever I heard of, this 'ere "mind cure" beats the lot! I don't hardly know what to make on't; yet I am alwers open to conviction, and when I see anything good 'complied by any manner o' means, I am willin' to give it credit. The most I can say for it, and the least, perhaps, is, that I shouldn't wonder if the mind cure was jest like the water cure, or the grape cure, or any other cure; good in some cases and for some dizeases, and good for nothin' in others.

But they claim—these metafysicians do, as the mind-cure folks call themselves—that when everybody fully understands and believes their doctrines, sickness and dizease will be conquered. And I guess that's a safe enough thing to say; for I've read their books faithful, and heard 'em lectur' and talk a good deal, and done my best to understand 'em, and I've come to the conclusion that three quarters on't is sheer nonsense—a jumble o' words, nothin' more. Some o' their books I dew think you might as well read back'ards as for'ards, for all sense they make!

And right here I'm goin' to stop and make a plee for plain, simple talk and simple writin'.

Why can't folks express themselves so 's their feller mortals can understand? Why can't they remember that simplicity is one o' the vartues and necessitudes o' life?

Fine language is like these 'ere French dishes at the fust-class hotels: the original flavor of the vittles is spilt and lost in the condyments and ingreiences that they fix 'em up in. The consequents is, nobody with a nateral, healthy appertite enjoys 'em. Oh, my friends, *dew* give us plain vittles and plain English! The majority orter rule in them things as well as in polyticks, and the majority sartinly dew like plain vittles and plain talk; if they don't, they orter, anyway.

But, as I was sayin', it'll proba'ly be a good while 'fore the world will fully understand and 'dopt the doctrin's of the metafysicians, and in the mean time folks will be sick 'bout the same as ever. Some will git well o' their own accord, or in the course o' natur' without doctors and medicine, and some 'll git well in spite o' doctors and medicine, if their constitootions is strong enough. Others will alwers believe they owe their lives to the mind cure, or some other cure—feel better ter dew so, you know. I guess it's well enough when anybody's sick to have a doctor, or try a "cure" of some kind. It's a comfort and releef—don't you think so?

It's astonishin' how 'tached folks git to their old family doctor! Mother often says she couldn't die without our Doctor Bonder; and when he went away on his trip to Californy, she declared she wouldn't be sick while he was gone, for there wa'n't another doctor "she'd have to a cat!" And she kep' her word, and was real smart till the day after he got home. Then she was took down with an awful 'tack o' newralgy, and sent off for him, post haste. But as true 's you live, she was

so excited and pleased at the thought o' seein' him agin, that her newralgy all left her 'fore he got his horse hitched. And when he come in and shook hands and asked her how she did, she told him she was "right smart," and he said, how "she looked as bright and harnsome as a young girl." Then he begun to tell us about his travels, what he see, and so on, and afterwards he stopped to tea. But mother's newralgy didn't occur to her at all, till after he'd gone away; then all to once she remembered and seemed kinder cut up about it. She's been sick a good many times sence, but she hain't had no more newralgy. Wall, there! I never thought on't before, but wa'n't that a clear case o' mind cure? Of course it was! But now, if she'd had a bile on the back of her neck, I don't sp'os'e the doctor's visit would a' made much difference, do you? I guess like enough she'd had ter polticed it some.

They pertend to say that there ain't no sech thing in reality as pizen or any other substance that 'll kill, unless you're a min' ter let it. But I was readin' the other day about a case that occurred in one o' these ere metafysician's own families. One o' the children swallowed a dose o' pizen by mistake, and what did they dew? Same's anybody else would. They give her an emetick and sent off for a stummick pump! Didn't wait to try no mind cure, nor preach no filosofy! I guess they naterally argered that it was best to be on the safe side in sech a case, don't you?

Did I ever tell you about Aunt Polly Davis's experience with 'em?

She'd suffered for years from rheumatiz, and

finally it seemed to settle mostly into one of her legs, so she couldn't get round the house at all, nor take a step without it's 'most killin' her. But Aunt Polly she's got an awful sight o' grit, and she wouldn't give up and be a helpless, good-for-nothin' creatur', even then, but insisted on tryin' to walk some every day, and Uncle Biar (that's her husband) got her one o' these 'ere rollin' chairs, so that with the help o' the hired girl she could go out-doors and get the fresh air. She used to enjoy life more'n some well folks, for she was real good company, and wherever she went there was alwers somebody ready to go along with her, or set down and talk when she got ready to stop. All the young folks liked her, and thought it was a great treat to spend an afternoon at her house. Sometimes she'd let 'em "lay over" her burow drawers and boxes, and she alwers give 'em some trinket or other to carry home.

Yes, everybody liked her and everybody felt 'bout as sorry for her as if she belonged to their own folks; so, naterally, when that mind-cure doctor come to town and begun to create a fury, they was for havin' Aunt Polly try her.

Aunt Polly's sharp and keen in her intellocks—she's well edicated, too; kep' the deestrick school for years 'fore she was married, and you can't humbug her more'n you could Mount Monadnock, not a mite!

Wall, when the Square's wife come to her and told her how the new doctor had cured Seliny Watkins, and a number of others, Aunt Polly laughed, and says she,

“There wa'n't nothin' the matter with ary one

on 'em. Seliny was the wust, and all ~~that~~ ailded her was hypo. There's a difference betwixt hypo and rheumatiz," says Aunt Polly. "My dizease ain't in my mind; it's in my leg. Do you s'pose any mental workin's is a goin' to give me a sound lim'? Nonsense!" says she.

"Wall, try her, anyway," says the Square's wife. "She won't dew ye no hurt, and she may dew ye some good."

"All right; fetch her along!" says Aunt Polly. So the very next day they sent her over.

Her name was—wall, I guess I won't tell her name—but she was a curis-lookin' woman; nobody ever looked like her. She was kinder fat and flabby and pale, even her lips was white; but her eyes was the queerest. When she once looked at you, they seemed to fasten on and burn and bore into ye, as it were.

And she dressed herself up to look as bad as she could, convenient. Fat as she was, she wore a garry-baldy waist, and a short skirt half-way up to her knees. Said she wore it for "convenyence and comfort." And we found out she didn't eat much of anything; lived on speritual food and Graham crackers, mostly. She said she expected ter get so's she could live without eatin' at all, sometime—throw off the "material body" and its wants altogether.

Aunt Polly said afterwards that "as long's she was in the body she thought she orter tend tew it, for looks' sake, if nothin' more. She did look like the Old Harry."

She had a pleasant way enough with her; and when she come and set down side of Aunt Polly,

so kinder home-like and quiet, she didn't mind the garry-baldy, nor the borin' eyes. She showed her her lim', all swelled up, and out o' shape and angry, and says she,

"There ! that's a pretty-lookin' lim', ain't it ?"

The doctor sighed real pitiful.

"It is very bad—in your belief—certainly," she said.

"In my belief !" says Aunt Polly. "In your belief too, ain't it ? You've got eyes—you see for yourself ! *My belief !*" says Aunt Polly, 'most a good min' ter be mad.

"My friend," says the doctor, "real soothin," let me tell you, to begin with, that we deny the existence of dizease except in the perverted minds of deluded men and women. There is no dizease there," pintin' to the lim'. "We deny it." She spoke very firm an begun to bore with her eyes. Aunt Polly laughed.

"I s'pose if you should tell me there wa'n't no nose on your face, you'd expect me to believe it ?" she says, sarkastic. Aunt Polly didn't mean nothin' special, but the doctor woman had an awful big, fat, round nose like Fredriky Breemer's in the picter, ye know. She clapped her hand over her nose and colored up red's a beet. Aunt Polly knew then that her nose was her sensitive pint. Funny, wa'n't it ? "I beg pardon," says Aunt Polly, "I didn't mean ter say nothin' personal."

"These things must be speritually dizerned, my friend," says the doctor, recoverin' her dignerty. "Will you now, for a few minutes, try to forgit your body and give your mind to what I shall say ?"

She looked at Aunt Polly in her queer way, and Aunt Polly says, "Why, yes, I dunno' but what I will—though the facts remain—here they be. Here's my lim' jest as it is, an here's your n—I mean here's Square Jones's barn (look-in' out o' the winder). They dew exist. You can't wipe 'em out, if you dew forgit 'em!"

"I want you to try ter see that the mind is infinitely sooperior to the body—the body is only its slave and subordinate."

"I should say," speaks up Aunt Polly, "that with a good many folks the body was the main part. I know some that hain't got mind enough ter keep 'em out o' mischief when—"

"I want you to think of man as he should be—as God made him," says the doctor.

"Oh," says Aunt Polly, "it's a good while sence he was made. We're all in a state o' sin and misery now, you know. I guess thinkin' we're different won't make us so; we'll have to take folks as they be."

"Well, take 'em as they be!" answers the doctor, a little grain out o' patience. "Ain't it pleasanter to think of your sperit than of your body? Your sperit, which is a part of God—is God, with whom dizease or evil of any kind cannot exist—and don't you see that if you are a part of God no dizease can really exist with you?"

"No, I don't see no sech thing! God give us bodies, and I think 's likely they was well enough to begin with; but they didn't stay so long, and they ain't now—that is, some on 'em."

The doctor hove a deep sigh. "I see I cannot do much for you at present," she said; "but

possibly if you could come to the meetin' to-night, you might git started in the right direction."

"If other folks can believe they are well when they ain't, I can," says Aunt Polly, "and I mean to give the thing a thorough trial. I'll go to the meetin', I'll be there," says Aunt Polly.

The doctor smiled encouragin'. "You are on the right track already, my friend," she said, and went away.

That night they wheeled Aunt Polly to the town-hall in her chair, and carried her up the stairs in their arms. The two mind-cure women come along up at the same time, and one on 'em spoke and says,

"If you will, you can walk down, a whole woman!"

"P'raps I can," mutters Aunt Polly, shettin' her teeth together.

Well, they said about the same things that she'd heard, and told over a good many wonderful cures that had been performed. Though they seemed to think the mind was all that needed curin'.

Aunt Polly was all worked up to the highest pitch when they got through. She remembered the years she had been in torment with her rheumatiz, and all the time givin' herself credit for throwin' it off uncommon well; and now to be told that there wa'n't no need of all that grit and endurance—she couldn't stan' it! She speaks up, and says she to the women,

"You see me when I was brought up them stairs to-night?" They nodded "We did; and

a very bad way you was in too—in belief.”
“And,” continues Aunt Polly “you mean ter say that I can walk down them stairs, and walk home if I only believe I can, and *will* ter dew it strong enough?”

“There is no doubt on’t,” they answers carmly.

“*Then I will, if I break my neck!*” says Aunt Polly.

The doctors looked kinder oneasy, and all the nabors gethered round and begged on her not to do sech a foolish thing, and resk her life, but her spunk was up.

“You heard them cases they told about—wuss than mine they was? Wall, what they did I can do, and I will. Don’t tech me—and don’t hender me! My mind’s made up!” Her hired girl flew out to get Uncle Biar to come and forbid her or stop her somehow; but la! you might as well tried ter hender chain lightnin’! She riz up and hobbled out quite smart to the head o’ the stairs, and then with her teeth shet firm together, and an awful look in her eyes, and with us all a watchin’ and holdin’ our breath, not darin’ to touch her, she actewally steps off from the broad top stair and—

Wall, Uncle Biar got there jest in time to pick her up, at the bottom o’ the stairs, where she tumbled and lay all in a bruised, senseless heap! And her well leg was broke!

They took her home and put her to bed, and we all expected to lose Aunt Polly sure. In the mornin’ the mind-cure women wa’n’t to be found. They had disappeared—left town. But I won’t keep you in suspense. Aunt Polly didn’t die.

She laid there, I don't know how many weeks ; and when her broken lim' got well, the other one was well too ! And she hain't never had no more rheumatiz from that day ter this !

She don't lay up nothin' against the wind-cure folks ; she says they cured her, after all

HER EXPERIENCE IN PALMISTRY.

They call it "Parmistry" now-days, and speak on't as an "occult sience," and so on; but 'tain't nothin' in the world but jest tellin' fortunes by the lines o' the hands.

We didn't use to calkerlate that anybody knew much about it but "hory sages" and gipsies, but now it's all the rage among fashnerble people and respectable folks, same's paintin' on chiny or Kensin'ton embroidery, you know.

When I was down to the beach 'long with my niece—she that was Araminty Smith—everybody was chuckin' full on't; it did beat all!

The young fellers went into 't head fust. It give 'em such a good chance to hold the girls' hands, and look into their eyes, and dew a good many things they couldn't no other way.

And the girls, they was glad o' the excuse to say disagreeable things to them they had a spite against, and to make love in an underhanded way, as ye might say, to the young men they liked the looks on.

There was one harnsome, black-eyed girl to the hotel where we stopped, that knew more about it than all the rest of 'em put together. They called her the "Gipsy Queen," and every evenin' when we was all down in the parlors there'd be a crowd round her, havin' their fortunes told. It was curis to hear her go on; ruther onpleasant too, sometimes. She had sech a way

o' huntin' out a person's weak pints, and holdin' em up for the rest to laugh at. But, after all, she was good-natered about it ; and as she sarved us pretty much alike, nobody thought o' gittin' mad at her.

Wall, after we got home, Minty and me, we continered to think o' the subjeck, and finally we took a notion we'd study up so we could tell fortunes ourselves. We went on and ransacked the bookstores and libries from one end ter t'other ; and we examined and studied the hands of all the members o' the family, till they was completely wore out.' Jack—that's Minty's husband—said how his'n was paralyzed.

Jack had an oncommon good hand to study, bein 's the lines was so clear and deep, and sech a lot on 'em. He said we'd found everything there, "from a large family o' children to a sea voyage—everything but a five-dollar bill."

When we'd worked oarselves into quite an excitement over it, and our resorces was pretty nigh exhausted, Jack he come to the rescue, as it were. One day he come luggin' along in to the room where we set the biggest book I ever see ! He laid it down onto the table as careful as if it had been so much gold.

"There, girls," says he, "if you must study the black arts, you'd better go to the founting head. You see this 'ere book ? Wall, here's the hull thing ! Now I advise you to set right down tew it and make yourselves comf'terble. And mind, hereafter I want you to let *me* alone."

Minty dropped on her knees before the monstrous volyume and looked at the title-page.

"Why, Aunt Ruth!" she said, "it's over two hundred years old! Think of it! And, oh dear me, do look at all the queer diergrams and things! How on airth did you git hold o' sech a treasure, Jack?"

"Money fetched it," said he, laughin'. "I paid a dollar for every year, and more too. All I hope is, that you'll git the vally o' the money out on't!" And he shrugged up his shoulders and went off laughin'.

Wall, I don't s'pose it was no more nor less'n idolatry the way we acted with that old book. One or t'other on us was on our bended knees afore it the biggest part o' the time. But it was dretful hard gittin' anything practikle out on't, because the writer seemed to be one o' them prosy, long-winded fellers that never says anything right straight out, nor comes to the pint 'less they're 'bliged tew. So we had to wade through oceans o' words to git a single idee.

It was all spelt with long s's too. I must say, I think there's been improvements in the art o' spellin', if in nothin' else. Our forefathers was awful shif'less 'bout some things! However, we managed to git a good deal that was new and curis, that we couldn't probably a found anywheres else. I s'pose that's what made the book wuth so much—though Jack says now-days anything two hundred years old is wuth its weight in gold, except old maids, and them don't fetch half-price.

Wall, when we'd got the "mounts" and "lines" and things pretty well fixed in our heads, we begun to be crazy to tell everybody's fortune.

Our washwoman was one o' the fust subjecks

we lited on to. She took her great hand out o' the tub and held it up to us drippin' with suds, as tickled as could be to have her fortune told. There's nothin' more univarsal than the desire to know the futur', is there?

Biddy's hand was a sight to see; as red as a piece o' beef, and all scarred and seamed! There was holes on the back that the rats gnawed when she was comin' over from Ireland in the steerage. One finger had been took off by a machine, and the rest was all drawed out o' shape with rheumatiz. It didn't take no sience nor book larnin' to tell that poor Biddy's lot had been a hard one. But she asked the same question they all do, invariable.

"Shall I live long?" says she. "I should like ter live long, mum," lookin' up into my face, wistful and confidin' as a child.

She had lived long a'ready. She was in her sixty-fifth year, but bein' 's sne's perfectly well, and tough as an ox, she bids fair to live many a year longer.

So I says, "'Cordin' to all 'pearances, Biddy, you'll live forever."

"An' is it rich I'm goin' to be?" she asked next, just as they all do.

"I don't see no legacies nowheres," says I; "but you'll never want for bread."

"Ligacies, is it?" she repeated, with a broad grin. "Sure an' I've had me ligacy! Didn't Mary Mulrooney lave me the ilegant warmin'pan? Wait, now, till I tell ye how it was. When I went to borry it of her the last time, she was mad, and she says ter me, 'Biddy Sullivan.

it's tired o' lindin' I am, intirely ! Kape the long-handled thing now, till I call for it,' says she.

"And whin I heard she was dead the other day, I claps me ould man on the back, and says I, 'Mike, she'll niver call for the warmin'-pan now !' says I. 'Thru for you,' says he, 'it's a ligacy !' That same was his very word. But go on with the fortune, mum."

"Oh, you have a good heart-line, and a fair head-line, and your last days will be your best," says I, glib as a poll-parrot.

"Glory be to God for that, mum !" says Biddy, fervent as a Methodist meetin'. "What with Mike's batin's, whin he's in the dhrink, and me pinin' for the fine litter o' pigs gone from us in the spring, it's nade enough I have o' better times ; it is indade !" and a big tear or two fell into the wash-tub.

It's curis, but everybody wants fortune to bring 'em somethin' they hain't got and can't have. Them that hain't no children are dretful anxious to find them in their hands. The poor want legacies and riches ; fools want honors ; and cut-and-dried old maids—that all the signs in the Zodiack couldn't alter—they want husbands. And, funniest of all, married folks are dyin' to have you say they're goin' to be widders or wid-derrers pretty soon ! And when you tell 'em they'll probably enjoy a good many years with their present pardners, they don't, as a ginerall thing, look quite happy.

Minty's minister is a good man, but awful sot and old-fashioned in his notions, and he wants everybody to think jest as he does.

Now I like these 'ere old-fashioned folks, myself, and hain't a word to say against 'em, only I dew believe most on 'em have weak spots, jest the same as other folks. Minty's minister had, and I must say I was sorry to have a hand in findin' 'em out.

You see, somebody'd told him how carried away we was on the subjeck o' Parmistry, and about our old book, and so on, and what does he dew but come right over to set us right.

He spoke out very severe; said how't he was "sorry to see any o' his flock spendin' their airthly probation in such friverlous, not to say wicked, pursoots," and he wound up as follers:

"Fortune-tellin', my dear ladies, is no more nor less than a silly humbug, by which only the ignorant and superstitious should be took in," etc., etc.

"Yes, sir, I know," says Minty, lookin' up at him with her great eyes, humble and respeckful as could be, "of course nobody would expect you to take any stock in it; we don't really, but it is curis and amusin' sometimes."

She turned her face up to his, innercent as a baby, and took hold o' one of his white hands, and looked at it kinder absent like, then turned it over and looked agin at the palm.

He had known her ever sence she was a baby, and he was old enough to be her par; so now he smiled down onto her, indulgent but very sooperior.

"What nice hands!" says Minty; "long, taperin' fingers—hands o' the highest order, 'cordin' to the old book, Aunt Ruth."

"Yes," says I, drawin' my chair up alongside, "and—he's got a double line o' life, Minty Smith! The fust one I ever see!"

"And what might a 'double line o' life' be, and what does it portend?" he asked, sarcastick and grand as the Great Mogul.

"Oh," says Minty, follerin' it out with her finger, "that's it, and it means everything good and great!"

"And then," she goes on gushin', "your head-line is wonderful deep and clear, and your heart-line—oh, dear! it must be tryin' for a minister of the Gospil to be sech a favorite with the ladies!" She sighed and looked at him admirin'ly.

"Come, come!" laughed the minister, givin' up both his hands to her and settlin' back comfortable in his chair. "It *is* amusin'—that is, rarthier—for anything so foolish, you know. You may go on, my child."

Then she told him a good deal that tickled and flattered him mitily. So fur it was all favorable. But all of a suddin Minty give a little scream and dropped his hand.

"*Was you ever drowneded?*—Oh dear! I beg pardon; of course you never was! But didn't you never fall into the water nor nothin'."

"Never!" says the minister, lookin' wild and settin' bolt upright in his chair. "What *dew* you mean, child?"

Minty looked distressed, but she didn't answer.

"What do you see? or what do you think you see?" asked the minister.

Minty laughed kinder histerikle. "Pshaw!"

she says, "of course there ain't nothin' in it, no way."

"Certainly not—of course not; but perceed," he said, tryin' to smile. "I assure you I find it very amusin'—very much so, indeed."

"But it ain't exactly funny—or wouldn't be if it was true," said Minty. "See here!" and, turnin' to a diergram in the old book, she showed him where the tips of the fingers was, full of wavy little lines; and, sure enough, there, on every finger of the minister's hand, was jest the same lines, as plain as day, and it said in the book that sech signs meant *dangers by water, or death by drownin'*.

The minister laughed a feeble little laugh and picked up his hat to go.

"Curis, very curis, certainly," he said, "but foolish."

"I s'pose it is," said Minty, most a cryin'; but if I was you, I'd keep away from the water. Don't never go nigh it, will you?"

"Our lives are in the Lord's hands," he answered, very sollum.

"Yes, but you'll be safest on dry land," said Minty, and he went away.

Now, sot as he was, strong in doctrine and in intelleck as he was, he had his weak spot, didn't he? And he'll be afraid o' the water as long as he lives!

He even went so fur as to have an artificial pond on his grounds filled up. Said how't "standin' water wa'n't helthy;" and when his socierty offered him a vacation and money to pay his expenses to go to Europe, he took the vaca-

tion and the money, but his physician didn't think a sea-voyage would be beneficial tew him, so he went to the White Mountings instid."

"Poor man," said Minty when she heard about it; "he needn't hang off; if he is to be drowned he will be, if he never goes nigh the water!"

But between you'n me, I don't believe much in Parmistry nor any other fortune-tellin'.

POOR AUNT BETSEY.

I was settin' by my winder the other mornin', and, hearin' the sound o' voices, I looked out, and there was old Aunt Betsey Griffin and her little nefew Jimmy, down on their knees in our door-yard diggin' dandylions.

Aunt Betsey's awful deaf, and Jimmy he had ær holler loud's he could in his little pipin' voice to make her hear.

"Aunt Betsey!" he screamed, "what made ye bring sech a great big basket for?"

"'Cos," says Aunt Betsey, "I wanted ter git a good mess. Yes," says she, diggin' away, "we wan' ter git a *good mess*, Jimmy. I says to your marm this mornin', 'Mary, we hain't had a dish o' greens this spring,' says I, 'and I'm jest han-kerin' arter some, as it were. Dandylions is real healthy in the spring o' the year, and they'd go fust rate 'long o' the biled dish ter day.'

"'All right,' says your marm, 'only if you git *any*, git a *good mess*; I wouldn't wash a little dab on 'em and git 'em ready ter bile for 'em.' "And she shall have a good mess," says Aunt Betsey, chucklin' and pullin' away at a tough one. "She shall have a good mess on 'em, Jimmy."

Jimmy laid down on the grass and begun ter play "stick" with his old case-knife.

"Say, Aunt Betsey," he screams pretty soon,



"AUNT BETSEY!" HE SCREAMED, "WHAT MADE YE BRING SECH A GREAT BIG BASKET FOR?" (Page 34.)

"I'm all tuckered out! Hain't we got 'bout enough?"

Aunt Betsey straightened herself up slow—for her jints is stiff—and looked inter the basket.

"Wall, I dunno but we have," says she; "you can carry 'em home to your marm—dandy lions ain't heavy—and I'll jest step in and see Ruth Ann a few minutes, now I'm here."

I alwers like to have Aunt Betsey come, but she's got a way o' tellin' the same stories over'n over every time you see her, and some folks think it's kinder tiresome; but la! as long as she enjoys it and it don't hurt nobody, let her dew it, I say. Old folks can't be young folks, of course. She's a *good* woman if ever there was one, and bright as a button about some things, notwithstanding' all she's been through.

When she come in I give her the rockin' chair and screamed into her ear as loud's I could, "How do ye dew to-day, Aunt Betsey?" I ginerally manage to make her understand as much as that to begin with, and then let her go on and do the heft o' the talkin' herself.

"Oh," says she, "I'm middlin' smart—from fair ter middlin'—considerin'."

That's what she alwers says, invariable.

Then she looked out o' the winder and laughed in her simple way, and I knew jest what was comin', but I let her run on.

"It was sech a mornin' as this, Ruth Ann," says she, "in the spring o' the year, in dandy lion time, that marm and I was washin' a mess o' greens for dinner, and all to once there come a rap on the door, and lookin' out o' the winder we

see a great white hoss standin' by the gate, with a gay saddle on him, and a darky holdin' him by the bridle.

"Marm she went ter the door, and there stood as harnsome a man as I ever set eyes on—all dressed up in his regimentles, he was—and he took off his hat to marm as perlite as you please, and made her a bow.

" 'How do you do, madam?' says he.

"Marm kerchied down ter the floor, and says she, 'I hope I see ye well, sir; won't ye come in?'

" 'Thank you,' says he, as perlite as you please, and he come in and set down, and put his hat on the floor. Then he asks,

" 'Is your husband about home this mornin'?' "

" 'No, sir; I'm sorry ter say he ain't,' says marm; 'he's jest gone down ter the vil-lage.'

" 'Very well,' says he, 'I shall find him there, I presume.'

"And he picks up his hat as if ter go, when he spies *me* a-hidin' behind his chair, and lookin' at him bashful, with my finger in my mouth.

"I was only a little gal, but he turns round ter me, lookin' kinder sollum and gentle inter my face, and he puts his hand on my head and says he, 'Little gal, grow up ter be a blessin' and comfort to your mother.'

"Them was his identikle words, Ruth Ann," says Aunt Betsey, sniffin' and wipin' her eyes, as she alwers does when she gits ter this place in her story.

"Yes, he laid his hand on to my head—and I was an awful bashful little gal—but I looked up

into his face when he spoke them words, and I says, tremblin',

"'Mister, I will,' says I; and then I hung down my head scairt enough; but I never forgot the smile he give me, nor how good and carm he looked, like the picters of the Lord in the big Bible; and I felt pooty much as if the Lord Himself had took my promise, as it were.

"Wall, then he bows ter marm and me, and goes out and jumps on to his great white hoss and gallops away.

"And I never forgot them words," says Aunt Betsey agin, rockin' and lookin' off across the fields in a dreamy kind of way; "and while I was a-takin' care o' marm all them years alone, and she a helpless creatur', I often said it over to myself, 'Be a comfort to your mother:' and I alwers answered back as I did that mornin', 'I will, I will.' And I guess I was; leastways, marm used ter say to me, 'Darter Betsey, you're good to your poor old marm. The Lord reward ye!'

"But she never knew all I give up for her sake. I wouldn't let her know. Poor old soul! She had trouble enough of her own to bear, without thinkin' o' mine. / What with her aches and pains, and father's takin' ter drink, and brother Joe's runnin' away, a body'd say she didn't need much more ter kill her. It was a mystery how she lived as long as she did."

Aunt Betsey fell ter musin' here, and kep' still for some little time; but she hadn't got done.

"Marm never knew, for I never told her," she goes on, bimeby. "I never told her how I sent Dan'l Jones a-goin' when he asked me ter marry

him, ruther'n leave her to the care o' strangers. I was all she had, ye see, and I dunno's I was ever sorry I done it ; only now she's dead and gone, and I'm an old woman myself, it doos seem ruther hard, sometimes, that I shouldn't have no darter to take care of *me* in my old age ; nobody but sister Griffin, and she only a half-sister, and grudgin' at that. 'Seems 's if the Lord had forgot all I done for marm—'t any rate He don't seem to consider *me* wuth bein' took care on—but there, Ruth Ann!—"

She looked up inter my face with a pitiful quiverin' kind o' smile that I couldn't stand no way. I took her poor old wrinkled hands in mine, and screamed into her ear that I felt for her, and that I didn't believe the Lord had forgot her, and so on.

"Oh, it's all right, it's all right, I know, Ruth Ann," she says, "but I can't help speakin' out sometimes. I dew hope I shall be forgiven—that the Lord won't lay it up agin me, considerin'."

She whimpered a little, and then wiped up her eyes, and set rockin' easy, back'ards and for'ards, for quite a spell, till finally she dropped off to sleep. Poor old soul ! I s'pose she was tired.

When she waked up, I went into the bedroom and got six great red peppermints for her—she's master fond o' peppermints—and she eat one or two of 'em and brightened up wonderful. Peppermints be warmin' and comfortin', that's a fact !

I knew she hadn't finished her story yet 'cordin' ter rule, and I begun to think that for once she was goin' ter forgit about it. But it wa'n't so. She put on her sun-bunnit and riz up to go, then

she turned round to me, and pintin' her finger very impressive, she says,

“Ruth Ann, that man that called on me and marm that spring mornin' when we was a-cleanin' greens was *Gineral—George—Washin'ton*!”

SHE FINDS THE COAL-MAN.

SEQUEL TO "SHE GOES TO BOSTON."

You remember I told you about my scrape with that coal-man, last Christmas, when I was to Boston? How I made him take me to the depot, and then hadn't a cent o' money to pay him, after promisin' to reward him liberal, too! I didn't mean no harm more'n a baby, but I know he thought I was a swindlin', lyin' woman, goin' round loose a-gittin' my livin' by workin' onto folkses feelins', and stealin' rides out o' poor coal-men! He hadn't no means o' knowin' the truth o' the matter, you see, and it did look bad—it looked against me, that's a fact. It would 'a' been easy enough to set the matter right, if I'd only remembered the feller's address, but I give up tryin' to dew that long ago; twa'n't no kind o' use. I'd settled it in my mind, though, that some time, pretty soon tew, I must hunt up that coal-man and have a settlement. But how to dew it and where to begin—that was the question. I thought it over'n' over till I was jest about crazy. I couldn't eat nor sleep, and mother she begun to worry about me and dose me with all kinds o' herbs and doctor's stuff. I took 'em ter please her, but I knew it wouldn't do no good. It was my *mind* that was 'fected. This is the way things was with me, when I got a letter from Jack and

Minty tellin' me that they had moved into Boston, and urgin' me to come down right off and make a good long visit. I said to once, "Mother, it's a providence; I'll go! Now's my time, and Minty will help me." So I got ready as quick's I could and started.

Minty met me to the depot, and the fust words she said was,

"Aunt Ruth, what under the canopy is the matter with ye? You look as if you'd had a fit o' sickness! Have you been sick?"

"No, Minty, I hain't," says I, "but there's other troubles in this world as wearin' as sickness."

"For pity's sake, what *do* you mean?" says she; and then I told her.

"It's that *coal-man* that's wearin' me away to a shadder, and nothin' else," says I. 'It's quiet up home, you know, and likely enough my mind's dwelt on the subjeck more'n what's reasonable or nateral; 't any rate, all I've done lately is jest to think, think, night and day, about how I cheated that poor feller! And now I've come to Boston, and I'm goin' to *find him*, and have a settlement with him if it costs *fifty dollars*!" says I, "and Minty, you've got to promise to help me, or 'less I'll go 'n' get somebody that will!" says I, and then I bust out cryin'. Minty laughed, and hugged me agin. "Cheer up," she says; "we'll have that old-fashioned conscience o' yourn out o' misery in no time! The coal-man shall be found, if we have to turn Boston inside out and hind side afore to do it," says she.

Minty's better for me than a bottle o' medicine

any day, and she chippered me right up, so't I felt more like myself than I had for a good while.

Wall, the next day, when I'd got rested a little, Minty and I talked the matter over, and we concluded that the fust thing for us to do was to advertise. So she writ a piece and sent it to the newspapers.

"That'll fetch him," says she, "if he can read and ever looks at a paper; but in the mean time we'll keep our eyes open. He may turn up when we ain't expectin'."

From that day for'ard it seemed as if I didn't think o' nothin' but my coal-man. Jack said how't I'd got the *monomanier*; but I knew better, and told him so. Nothin' in this world ailded me, and I should be all right soon's this business was off my mind.

The fust time I went on the street, I come pretty nigh gittin' killed myself, or killin' somebody else, a number o' times. You see my eyes was everywheres to once, but mostly in the road, lookin' out for coal carts; and every one I spied, I generally made a dive back'ards or for'ards to git a sight o' the driver's face, ye know. And it wa'n't a safe way to dew in a crowded street, by no means.

Once I run into a man, and jabbed a stool he was carryin' right into his stummuck, so'st he bellered out, and everybody turned round and stared.

"Old lady," says he, "mind where you're goin' tew, can't yer? Ain't there room for me and you too on this 'ere sidewalk?" Some laughed, and I felt cheap enough.

Another time I walked straight into a lady's face and eyes, my gaze bein' fixed ahead in the road, on a coal cart jest heavin' in sight. I bumped square into her face, and her spe'tacles fell off. She dropped her puss and let go of the string that was hitched onto her poodle dog, and I lost my bag; so we had to paw round quite a spell afore we got right side up agin.

I pollygized as well's I knew how, and asked her if I couldn't do somethin' to kinder bring her tew and make her feel better.

She was leanin' up against a store winder, and she jest put up her hand to fix her spe'tacles onto her nose more firm, then she looked me over carmly, and says she, "*How very peculiar!*"

I was awful mad! If she'd jawed and scolded I wouldn't 'a' cared; but to have her treat me as if I was a menagery or some so't of a curiosity—I couldn't stan' it!

"Marm," says I, "p'r'aps you'd be '*peculiar*' yourself if you had a hull city full o' coal-men to look after!" says I.

That made her stare all the more insultin', and I went off and left her standin' there as if she's parilized. I dunno but what she stands there yit. I don't care a snap if she does!

But that wa'n't a circumstance to what I come tew another time. Minty and me went one afternoon to a concert in the Music Hall. We thought it would rest us and do us good; and anybody'd think I wouldn't be sech a fool as to look for a coal-man there!

I set through the fust half o' the concert; the music wa'n't very interestin' to me—too high-

toned I s'pose. I don't like this *hilter-skitter* music; I like somethin' with a *tune* to it, if it's nothin' more'n "Yanky Doodle." Wall, as I was a-sayin', I didn't feel interested in the music, and so I got to thinkin' and wonderin' about my coal-man; when all to once a man right in front on us had a little coughin' spell, and 'turned his head round so't I could see his face. I grabbed Minty's arm.

"Minty," I whispered, "there's my man—there!"

She looked where I pinterd, and says she: "Aunt Ruth, you're crazy! That man is a *gentleman*; he looks like a Beacon Street swell! Do be quiet!" says she.

"He's the feller I rid on the coal cart with, anyway," says I, "or 'less he's a *twin*! And I'm goin' to speak to him after this show is over, sure's my name is Ruth!"

"How foolish!" says Minty. "'Tain't very likely coal-men make a business o' washin' up and puttin' on their kid gloves and goin' to concerts right in the middle o' the day!" says she.

But there I set and looked at him; and the more I looked the more sartin I felt that he was the very man. Every featur' of his face looked nateral. "Who knows but what he's had a fortune left to him?" says I to myself. "Stranger things have happened." So when the concert was over, I jest pushed my way 'longside of him, and laid my hand on his arm.

"Excuse me, sir," says I, all of a tremble, "but ain't you the coal-man that carried me to the depo' one day 'bout Christmas time last year?"

The man drawed back a little, and looked at me serious and inquirin'. I was awful scairt, but he didn't speak, and I's bound I'd make him. So I follers on, and says I:

"Mebby you've had a fortune left ye—it looks like it—and if so, I'm glad on't; but you needn't be ashamed to remember doin' a kind act, and I want to thank you and relieve my mind, all the same, if you don't need my money now," says I.

We was half way out by this time, and he seemed to have got his mind made up about me; for he turns to me and says, very serious and respeckful,

"Madam, you are laborin' under a misapprehension. But I beg you to take this, and when you find the honest coal-man that does me the honor to resemble me so close, will you give it to him from me?"

Them was his very words; and dropping a twenty-dollar gold piece into my hand, he lifted his hat way offn his head, as if I'd been the queen, and walked on.

I looked at the money and wondered whuther no I wa'n't dreamin'. Minty she ketched hold of me and hauled me away and downstairs, quick's she could. "Oh, Aunt Ruth!" says she, half cryin', "what *have* you done?"

"I dunno what I've done," says I. "But if that high and lordly feller ain't a *twin* to my coal-man, I'll *eat* him."

"That man," says Minty, "is the richest man in New England! I knew him the minute I see his face."

"Oh, wall, if he's so terrible rich, I'm glad on't,"

says I, "bein's he won't never miss the money he give me, and it'll be quite a fortune to my coal-man when I find him." I walked on, tryin' to feel as bold as a lion, but I didn't—I felt like death; and I guess Minty knew it, for she never said another word about it.

After this I kep' pretty quiet for a while—only I run into a peanut-stand one day, and had to pay a dollar and a half damages; and once I chased a coal-cart till I was clean beat out, and had to hire a coach to carry me home.

But the wust on't was, I was gittin' all discouraged, and I was willin' to own at last that I *had* got the monomanier, or a touch on't, anyway; and finally I consented to let 'em call in the doctor.

He said how't my sitem needed *tonin' up*, and left me some medicine. I took the medicine faithful, but I knew, and Minty knew too, that I shouldn't ever git *toned up* right till I found that pesky coal-man.

Our advertisin' didn't amount to shucks. A few smutty-faced, lyin' fellers called on us, expectin' to make somethin' out on't, I s'pose; but we wa'n't so easy took in, and they went away as poor as they come.

One day Minty showed in a young Irishman. He come bowin' and 'scrapin' up to the table where I set sewin', threw down his old hat, and put out his black paw with a flourish, as if he was tickled to death to see me.

"Be me sowl," says he, "if it isn't the identikle old lady herself, now. I knew ye as quick as I set me two eyes on ye!"

"Singular," says I, cool's could be—for I'd got used to 'em, you know—"singular, but I never see *you* afore," says I.

"Oh, now," says he, coaxin' like, "ye wouldn't be afther forgittin' so aisy. Think, now, how would it be, say, barrin' the *baird* and the short cut o' me hair for the hot weather?" says he.

"Bar as much as you're min' to," says I, "but if you'll stop your blarney and tell me what you want, I'll be obleeged to ye."

He seemed a'll struck of a heap for a minute, and then says he, "An' didn't ye advertise for the young man as driv' ye ter the depo' on his coal-cart last Christmas?"

"I did," says I.

"And isn't it mesilf as is the very feller?" says he, slappin' his knee and lookin' up as bold as brass agin.

"Now I think on't, I dunno but you be," says I—"yes, I guess you're the feller; and I s'pose you've come to pay over that five dollars I lent you," says I, and I riz up and held out my hand to him.

You orter seen that man! He looked all ways to once, and everywheres but at me; then he picks up his old hat in a hurry, and says he,

"It's mistaken I am now, intirely! It's not mesilf at all—I mane—it's not—it's not *your-silf*—"

"Oh yes, it is," says I, cuttin' him short. "It's *my* self, but it's not *your* self!" So sayin', I opened the door and he blundered out and off.

This was only one of quite a number of experiences we went through, and all for nothin'. No

great wonder I had the *monomanier*, was it? It was a mercy Minty didn't git it fastened on to her, too. She did come dretful nigh it.

But there's an end o' some kind to all things; and there is to this story, as you'll see, bimeby.

One mornin' Minty come to me after breakfast and says, "Aunt Ruth, Jack is goin' to be away a few days, and while he's gone you and me'll *give a party—a coal-man's party*. We'll advertise in every way we can for two days, and on Thursday we'll hold the recepshun in our basement. We'll have lemonaid, and donuts, and sandwidges enough for all the coal-men in town. What do you think on't?" says she.

I was so struck with the idee that I didn't breathe for much as a minute!

"Minty! you're a genyus!" says I. "It's jest the thing!"

So we set right about it. It was awful hot weather, and it stood to reason that no hard-workin' coal-man would miss a chance o' gittin' a good lunch and a cool drink o' lemonaid, free gratis for nothin'. "That must fetch him," thinks I, and I felt encouraged. The advertisement run this way:

"FREE LUNCH TO COAL-MEN! AT NO. 35 CLAY
STREET (BASEMENT), FROM 11 A.M. TO
1 O'CLOCK. COME ONE, COME ALL!"

I asked Minty what she s'posed the neighbors would think, when they see the doin's. She said she didn't care what they thought; but they'd probaly think we's exsentricks, and took that way

o' doin' good. It was fashnerable to be exsen-trick.

When the time come, it was well wuth all our trouble jest to see 'em; and if it hadn't 'a' been for my monomanier we sh'd had lots o' fun out on't.

There was a line o' coal-carts standin' up and down our street as fur as you could see both ways, and them fellers kep' a-pilin' in to that basement, as business-like as you please, as if, for all the world, it was an every-day thing to 'em; and they scrambled for the vittles and drunk hull tubs full o' lemonaid as if it did 'em good. I guess it did. We didn't worry none about that, anyway.

Wall, the time passed, and it was goin' on two o'clock, and amongst all them smutty-faced fellers I hadn't see one that looked like my coal-man. I had on my best caliker dress and I'd sp'ilt it long ago,—they slopt the lemonaid round so,—and Minty, she'd sp'ilt hern too; but we didn't care for the dresses, we was so disap-pinted. I was 'most a-cryin', but I kep' round among 'em, waitin' on 'em kinder mecanikle, when all to once an uproar riz—loud laughin' and talkin', and jokin' back and forth, about somethin' or 'nother, we couldn't make out what. But finally we diskivered the cause on't.

They was all settin' on to one little feller, and when we inquired into it they laughed and shouted, and said how't he'd been stuffin' his pockits, and they insisted on't that he should "shell out," as they called it, 'fore they'd let him go.

Minty spoke to 'em in her pretty way, and begged 'em to remember there was ladies present, and behave like gentlemen. They simmered down to once, then, and Minty went to the little feller and spoke real kind. "Can't you eat enough?" says she. "What makes you fill your pockits? The rest don't do so."

He looked sheepish for a minute, and then he spunked up, and says he, "Yes, marm, *I've* had enough myself, and thank ye kindly for't; but I thought as how 'twouldn't be no harm to carry some ter Jim—Jim Rasher—he's sick, ye know; and he hain't got nobody but me to look out for him, he hain't."

Of course we was interested to once, and asked a good many questions; and Minty told the boy to wait till the others was gone, and then she put up a baskit o' things for him to take along to his friend.

While she was talkin' I was a-thinkin'. I says to myself, "You'd better go 'n' see this sick man; mebby it 'll ease your mind to dew for *some* coal-man if you can't for the right one." So I run upstairs, put on my bunnit, clapped my puss into my pockit, and was ready and waitin' when he come out with his baskit. We went along together, and—wall, I may as well tell ye now—I *found my coal-man!*

He was sick, sure enough. And he lay in a miserble room, on a miserble bed, and the flies was eatin' on him up, and there wa'n't no air in the room fit to breathe, and he was tossin' and moanin', burnt up with fever.

Somethin' told me I had found him afore I

fairly see his face ; and when I went up to him and laid my cool hand onto his head, he knew me too. He looked at me for a minute in that stoopid, stunned way o' hisn—I remembered it perfeckly—but he knew me, and his great, honest eyes kinder smiled, though his mouth was so solum, and he says,

“Old lady, is it you?” I couldn't speak to once, if I died, but I opened the baskit, and got him out some grapes, and sent the boy for some cool water, so I could bathe his head. Bimeby I told him how I felt when I found I'd forgot his address, and how I'd worried ever sence ; how I'd hunted for him, and about the free lunch and everything. “And, now,” says I, “I want you to cheer right up, for I'm goin' to send you a doctor, and we'll have you well in no time. Is the old white horse alive and well?” says I.

Upon this he smiled bright's a button.

“Yes, marm,” says he, “the old mare's all right, thank ye.”

“Wall,” says I, pretty soon, “I must leave ye now. Ain't there some woman we can git to come and stay with you a spell, and nuss you up?”

He picked at the bedclo'es and looked foolish ; but finally I managed to make out that there was a girl he was a-goin' to marry, that would be glad to come, but she didn't even know he was sick yet.

So the little feller—his friend—and me, we went away together and hunted up the girl and her mother. The girl's name was Berlindy, and she seemed dretful fond of him. Wall, I left 'em

some money, and went home to Minty. She was wonderful excited over it.

"Our '*free lunch*' was a success, after all!" says she, and we went to bed that night, two happy wimmin, if we was all tuckered out.

The rest is soon told. We kep' an eye on Jim Rasher, and after a while Jack give him a place in his own office, and Minty took Berlindy into the house as a servant.

When they was married, we helped fit 'em out, and among other things I give Jim the twenty-dollar gold piece, and the man's message along with it.

He looked more stoopid and stunned than I'd ever seen him afore; but Berlindy she wa'n't flustered a mite. She swallered it all, and more tew. She tossed up her head, and says she, "I should like ter see the man that can hold a candle to *my Jeemes* for good looks, if he is a milling-nair!"

WRITING FOR THE NEWSPAPERS.

I've had curi's experiences sence I begun to write for the papers.

The nabors got hold on't, somehow, that I was a writin', and it was queer enough to see how the different ones took it.

Old gran'marm McGilvry, she was the fust to come to interview me. She's a reg'lar old gossip, but she alwers 'peared to think well o' me. She begun before she fairly got her bunnit off.

"Ruth Ann," says she, "I'm glad to hear that you're a doin' somethin' oncommon; and I say if you behave yourself, 'tain't anybody's business if you *dew* write for the papers, and *I* say if folks are a min' ter talk, why let 'em *talk*!"

My nighest nabor, Mis' Carter—she's a little narvous, sensitive thing—she come over in a peck o' trouble, and says she,

"Ruth Ann, there's one thing I hope and pray you won't never do, and that is, to put your nabors into your pieces; if you do, it'll make no end o' trouble. Now I've alwers told you everything about me and my husband, and about Mary and her beau—you know how I've confided in you, Ruth Ann—and if you go to puttin' on't in print, I declare I don't know what I *shall* do!"

She was almost cryin' and I felt bad for her.

"La, Mis' Carter," says I, "don't you be one mite afeared. I hain't no notion o' doin' any sech

thing. I reckon I can find enough to write about without betrayin' my nabor's sekrits ; when I can't I'll give it up," says I.

She wiped her eyes then and felt better. "I might a known," she said laughin', "but that's the way *some* o' them writers do."

"It's awful small business," says I.

"That's so," says she.

Next, Amandy Plimpton come drivin' over pell-mell. She had a great big sheet o' paper kivered over with verses, and a bran'-new lead pencil stuck over her ear, as if she meant business.

She'd been writin' poitry, and she wanted me to read it, and correct it, and send it 'long with my next piece to the newspaper man. She said she'd leave the matter o' *compensation* entirely to the editor.

She was all up and a comin', as you might say, and I had to set right down and read it ; I went through it two or three times careful and candid, but I couldn't make no head nor tail to it, and finally give it up.

"Amandy," says I, "I guess it's good poitry, but I'm afraid it ain't '*available*.' Mind ye, Amandy, that ain't sayin' a word aginst it, only it ain't just what they want."

"How do you kow 'tain't?" says she. "See here, you needn't be afraid I'll put *your* nose out o' jint ; *you* don't write poitry—don't pertend to—do ye?"

"Oh, no ; I don't, that's a fact," says I laughin', "and, what's more, I ain't no judge o' poitry. I have to scratch my head a good while sometimes 'fore I can make out what the best on't means ;

but as long as you *would have* my 'pinion I had to say somethin'."

"Of course you ain't to blame for not bein' able to 'preciate poitry," says Amandy, real considerate, "and I guess I'll consult some fust class poet, and then I shall know."

'Cordinly she sent it to Mr. Whittler, and in the course of a week it come back, and a real nice note 'long with it, sayin' that he couldn't thank her enough for the pleasure o' readin' on't, but suggestin' that *editors* was the best judges o' poitry. So she posted it right off to the Bangtown Magazine, and waited on tiptoe for the answer.

If you'll believe it, them verses was sent back to her with the solitary, single word "*trash*," writ on top of 'em, and that was all. Oh, how mad she was! She says to me, says she, "*Trash*" be they! *Them verses* that thrilled me through and through to *write*, and make creepers up and down my spine to *read*! Oh, the wretches!

Listen to these "Lines to James Henry." She read the fust verse:

"When I am dead and in my grave,
Oh weep not for Amandy;
Some other girl you'll probaly find,
There's plenty standin' handy."

"Now, Ruth Ann, even *you* can see that that is touchin'—thrillin'."

"Yès," says I, "ondoubtedly; but them editors is a tough lot, with backbones of iron and narves of steel. They don't thrill wuth a cent. But come, never mind, Mandy, let's work on our

crazy quilts," says I, tryin' to divert her mind, as it were. But she didn't seem to hear me, and read right on. "Ruth Ann," says she to me when she got through, "if that 'ere ain't real poitry I'll *eat it!* Look at the sentimunt!"

"Why, yes," says I again, "and I'm sure it must be real comfortin' to James Henry. It reminds me somehow of the little verse we used to write in our books to school; don't you remember?"

" 'When I am dead and in my grave,
And all my bones are rotten,
This little book shall tell my name
When I am quite forgotten.' "

"I should say your'n was fully equal to that, and you know what a run *that* had."

"*Equal to that!*" snapped Amandy all out o' patience; "what's the use o' talkin' to *you*—you don't know *abserlutely nothin'* about poitry, and that ends it!"

"I'm afraid you're correck," says I, real 'umble. "I never wrote but one verse in my life, and that was to the man that was gittin' up a book o' New Hampshire poets. He kept sendin' and askin me to contribute somethin'. I told him I couldn't; I didn't write verses; but he hung on till I finally got mad and sent him this:

" 'I ain't no poit,
And now you know it.' "

That seemed to satisfy him."

Cousin Safrony, she told me that they talked my pieces all over to the mother's meetin', and

then agin to the sewin' circle, and some said one thing and some another.

The Square's wife used to be a school-teacher, and she said how it wasn't nothin' to write for the papers; she'd got stacks o' manuscrip' put away up garret that she made up herself. She never had none on't published—felt delekit about it—thought it required a good deal o' *cheek* for a woman to 'pear before the public in print. But the Square often remarked that "that manuscrip' would be a mint o' money to somebody sometime."

"But I'll bet a cookey," says Safrony to me, "that it wouldn't fetch more'n the wuth of its weight for paper rags!" "And now," she continued, "I'm goin' to tell you somethin' in confidence that I never told no livin' mortal before! I've been thinkin' lately whuther or no *I* hadn't orter go into this writin' business myself!

"Why, ever sence I can remember I've laid awake hours and hours, makin' up stories and sermons, and all sorts of things—in the *dead o' the night!* Ain't that the way you dew?"

"Ketch me layin' awake nights!" says I, laughin'. "No; I make a regular business o' sleepin', and tend right to it every night."

Safrony looked astonished. "Is that so?" she says; "you're the fust writer I ever heard on that did! But there's *one* thing I s'pose you all *have* to dew; that is, live on fish mostly—to feed your brains?"

"No, *I* don't," says I, "and, what's more, I wouldn't if my brains starved to death. I can't bear fish, and never eat it when I can git any-thing else."

"Wall, I must say," says Safrony turnin' up her nose, "that you ain't much of a writer if you don't do no different from other folks."

"Oh wall," says I, laughin', "I ain't much of a writer; nothin' 'larmin'."

Mis' Gardner was the only one that seemed to feel real malice toward me. What does she do, but carry one o' my pieces to the litterary circle, and read it loud, and then pass it round 'mong the company so's they could see how many mistakes in spellin' there was in it. She'd marked 'em all off, and it was pretty much *all* marks, I tell ye.

Safrony was bound she'd stick up for me, so when they handed it to her she says,

"Good land, I don't s'pose them newspaper men care how its spelt if it only makes sense."

"I should think they'd correctify it before they printed it," says the deacon's wife.

"Like enough they don't know how to spell *over and above* well themselves," says Mis' Gardner, pinchin' in her lips. "I guess they never won no dictionaries to spellin' matches."

While they was laughin' the Square's wife come in, and they showed her the piece.

"Good gracious, how stoopid you all be!" she said when she'd read it. "Ruth Ann spells that way a purpose, and if she don't spell bad enough I'll warrant the editors puts on the finishin' touches themselves! Poor spellin' is all the fashion now," says she.

They felt pretty well took down then, and didn't say another word; for the Square's wife is law and gospil among 'em you know.

Safrony asked me if I didn't never write nothin' and spell it all correck.

"Sometimes," I told her, "but it's pretty diffi-kilt, and I have to keep a dictionary open before me every minit. I've spelt *rong* so long that it don't come handy to spell *rite*," says I.

"Then while you're about it why don't you spell *wuss*? There's Joshua Billin's and Mister Nasby now—you don't begin to spell as bad as they dew."

"Oh no," says I, "but their spellin' makes anybody feel crampy all over; it ain't comfortable. I don't want to do nothin' to hurt. I jest lay out to amuse folks in a comfortable kind of a way. And besides," says I, "I don't depend altogether on my spellin', I generally put in a few *idees*."

"Oh, I didn't think o' that," says Safrony, "I guess that's what makes your pieces *take* so well."

I thought it was real nice in Safrony to stick up for me after I'd made light o' her layin' awake nights and so on, but Safrony and me was always good friends.

Aunt Polly Davis seemed to take a great deal of pride in me at fust. "Jest to think," says she, "that we should go and have an author in the family after all! We've had a' most everything else, and now we've got a bonny fidy author! I'm real thankful," says she, "and I dew hope you'll make a good use o' your *money*! Perhaps by'n by you'll git round to help me and your uncle lift that pesky mor'gage. You won't hardly know what ter do with so much money, will ye?"

"I guess it'll be a spell before I'll have enough to burden me," says I, laughin'.

"Why, less see," says she, "how much do you git for a piece?"

"Oh," says I, "from 10 to 25 dollars."

"And how long does it take ye to write one?"

"Oh, when I git fairly *at it*, say a week for the longest ones, with what other work I do. You know I help a good deal round the house."

Aunt Polly took a piece o' paper and borrered my pencil and set right down to it. She figgered it out somethin' like this,

$$\begin{array}{r}
 52 \text{ weeks (year).} \\
 25 \text{ dollars (apiece).} \\
 \hline
 260 \\
 104 \\
 \hline
 1300 \text{ per year.}
 \end{array}$$

"My senses! Ruth Ann," says she, "it can't be! I have made some mistake! You look it over and see if I've multiplied and kerried right. I ain't much of a hand at figgers."

I looked it over. "Your *conclusion* would be correck enough if your *premises* wan't wrong, as we used to say at school," says I.

"Do you mean that you don't actilly earn that much money a year?"

"I mean that I aint a *machine*," says I. "You hain't took nothin' into consideration." Then I tried to explain how sometimes I couldn't write at all—the idees wouldn't *flow*, as it were—and

then agin, how some pieces wa'n't *available*, and so on.

She looked blank enough. "Oh," says she, kinder contemptewous, "it seems ter be a dretful onsartin' business, and don't amount to much after all!"

SHE GOES TO "THE GERMAN."

Did I ever tell you 'bout my goin' to the German that winter I was to Sophiar's?

Wall, you see Snobtown ain't a big city. I tell 'em it ain't neither one thing nor t'other. It seems pretty much like our village to home, but I s'pose there is, in pint o' fact, a good many more houses and folks, or it wouldn't be called a city. At any rate, it's enough like a city ter make 'em want to dew everything anybody does, and so, 'cordin'ly, they have "Germans."

They 'low that nobody goes to these parties but jest the very "*aleet*" (that's French, and means big-bugs).

James and Sophiar don't seem to feel very big, and I don't know exactly what constitoots an "*aleet*;" but one thing is sartin, if they hadn't been one they couldn't 'a' gone to that ere "German" and took me, so I'm naterally glad they was considered up to the scratch.

Wall, when we got there, we found all the ladies in the dressin' room puttin' on their white kid gloves. Some on 'em went 'way up to their elbows.

But there was one o' the most airy-lookin' ladies, pertendin' to be in a great stew, because she'd left her gloves to home; and she was goin' round tryin' to make some o' the other ladies leave off thern to keep her in countenants.

She came to Sophiar, but Sophiar, says she,
“*I wear gloves to cover my hands—you know I do my own work, Mis’ Dainty; your hands look well enough without, I’m sure.*”

This seemed to please the lady, and she *had* the harnsometest hand and arm I ever seen on a mortal woman. I kinder suspicioned she planned it all to show ’em, too. James said afterwards how she might ’a’ spared enough off’n the tail of her gown to cover her hands and arms, and neck, tew, just as well as not!

Speakin’ o’ trains, hardly any o’ the ladies wore ’em, and them that didn’t, seemed to have a particklar spite agin ’em. It wa’n’t the *gentlemen* that complained on ’em, and stepped on ’em most, I noticed that pint.

Sophiar introduced me to a slim, genteel-lookin’ young man, with a red ribbin round his neck and a silver whistle hung on to it. He was their *leader*, she said, and pretty soon he blew his whistle and the musicianers struck up a lively waltz, and all the gentlemen rushed to the door o’ the dressin’ room, took their ladies on their arms and went into the ball.

I was thankful for James’s arm to lean on to, for the floor was so slippery that I knew I couldn’t ’a’ walked acrost it alone to save my life, to say nothin’ o’ dancing on sech a floor; I don’t see how they ever dew it!

We found chairs all set redy for us. They was mostly tied together tew by tew with long sashes o’ ribbin of different colors. We all set down and spread out our dresses and looked at one ’nother a spell; then the whistle sounded and

each gentleman took his pardner in his arms and begun ter spring round in a lively waltz.

Some o' the dancers looked very well, and some didn't. There was one little feller had the cunninest mite of a girl for a pardner. I heard him call her "Mamy." They looked well together, and danced like two feathers. One man was dretful tall, and stiff as a ramrod. He used his legs as if they didn't belong to him, and his pardner (she was his wife), she looked as if she didn't belong to him, nuther. So they danced pretty much on their own hook, poppin' this way and that, any way to get round. I pitied 'em, for it must 'a' been hard work; but they seemed ter be tryin' to do their dooty, anyway. There was another feller, a medical student, Sophiar said he was, that I couldn't help watchin', he went into 't so business-like. He didn't turn out for nobody nor nothin', but dashed right ahead, with his mouth open, and his tongue a-workin' for all the world like a boy when he's learnin' to write.

He got some pretty hard knocks, and I pitied his pardner, but she didn't seem to mind. I s'pose she'd got used to it.

It was queer the different ways they had of holdin' on to one 'nother. Some stood way off, like the picter of the Puritan lovers kissin'. Some hugged up most tew tight, I thought, and some took hold o' hands and held 'em out one side, arm's length, and took up more room than belonged to 'em. Some pumped up and down with their elbows, and rocked fust one side and then t'other; they called that the "*Boston dip*."

They didn't dance long to begin with, and I

didn't have time for observin' half what I told you. When the whistle blew, the music stopped, and the leader said they would now have a figger called "Sir Rogerly Coverlid," or somethin' like that.

Wall, you've seen the girls to the 'Cademy go through with their jimnastic figgers? It seemed to me pretty much like them, only with a good deal o' waltzin' mixed up in it. Then they had other figgers—*plays*, I should call 'em—and 'mazin' silly ones, too, for growed up men and wimmin to partake together in. One was "Puss in the corner," where they put a lady inter each corner of the room, and then let five gentlemen make a dive for 'em. Of course the spry ones walked off with a pardner, and left the fifth feller alone lookin' silly enough, and everybody smiled. I didn't, though, I thought it was real embarassin' for the poor young man.

I mustn't forget to tell ye that there was a table in one corner where they kept the "favors." "Favors" are little fancy things; silk wheel-barrers, rosettes, and parasols, and anything cute and pretty to look at, and of no other mortal use. Though Sophiar said that sometimes they give real useful presents. But that night they seemed ter be mostly for ornament, and they pinned 'em on to one 'nother, till the men, 'specially, looked as if butterflies had lit all over their black coats.

And so they went on waltzin' and waltzin', and the genteel leader begun to look as if he was dewin' somebody a favor in holdin' himself together, and the musicianers seemed to grow tired and sleepy. One o' them musicianers—the feller

that blowed the horn—had a very sick baby to home, so Sophiar told me. Poor man, while all this gaiety was goin' on, his baby might be dyin'. Once when they was playin' one of them sobbin' kind o' waltzes that sounds more like death and misery than a dancin' tune, I see him put up his hand and wipe away a tear. I wanted ter go and ask about the baby, and tell him I felt for him, but Sophiar said it wouldn't dew.

About 11 o'clock they had refreshments, and they come in jest the nick o' time, tew. I don't believe we could 'a' held out much longer without somethin' ter kinder brace us up. Not that anybody *appeared* anxious to git anything to eat; oh, la, no indeed, fur from it!

The ladies took the plates o' chicken salud and skalloped oysters with the tips o' their fingers, and pecked away at 'em with their forks as if it was really a cross to have to eat. But I noticed that whole plates-full disappeared somehow or nother—in quick time tew, and the gentlemen had to step round lively to keep their pardners' wants supplied, and get a chance to eat anything themselves.

There's one thing wimmin *can* beat the men at, and that is *eatin'*. And they have sech a way that they can make pigs o' themselves and nobody know it!

Wall, after supper we all felt better, and there seemed to be ruther more sociability and talkin', not any to hurt though. Sophiar says it ain't considered the thing among the "*aleet*" to speak up loud or laugh hearty, and they did all seem subdood and sollum—enough for a funeral, that's a fact.

But I heard 'em sayin' to one 'nother how't they were havin' a "charmin' time," "delightful evenin'," and so on, and I concluded they felt 'nore cheerful than what they looked.

To wind up with, they had a militerry figger and grand march. Afore they got done marchin' they all pulled little gilt paper things that had torpedoes inside on 'em and went off with a crack, and out came for each one a cap or head-riggin' of some kind made o' tissue-paper.

They was all colors and shapes; some on 'em was harnsome and some on 'em was hidgeous, but howsomever, they straightened 'em out as well as they could and put 'em 'on their heads. I *did* think I should die to see 'em! Such a ridickerous sight as they was! One big man with a beard all over his face, had on a little white, baby night-cap, tied under his chin! And another little mite of a man looked fierce enough in a great red helmet, with an awful green eye a-top on't! If them men had been anywheres else, I'm sartin they couldn't 'a' been hired to make themselves look so silly!

I guess the wimmin enjoyed their caps the most, though they seemed anxious to know if they was becomin', and I see some changin' goin' on. Most on 'em wore their riggin' all through the dance, which was, as I said, a militerry figger. Sophiar and James give me their caps and favors to bring home and show the folks.

I was glad when it was over, 'specially on account o' the poor musicianer with the sick baby waitin' for him to home. I guess his wife was glad to see him, and I hope the baby got well, but I hain't heard.

THE STORY OF "HARNSOME MARIAR."

RELATED BY THE DEACON'S WIFE.

"I am dretful strong on temperance, to begin with—as a woman in my posishun orter be. You see I've been president of the "W. C. T. U. O. C." (which stands for 'The Wimmins Christian Temperance Union of Crabtown') goin' on four year, and durin' that hull time, I've looked arter the interests o' the socierty faithful, set on the platform to all the meetin's and interdooced the speakers. Though Caleb Jason—that's my husband—alwers makes a fuss; says he don't want his wife "stuck up there 'long with a pack o' old maids and widders, most on 'em humly enough to make a decent man sick tew his stummick!"

I says, "Caleb Jason, they *be plain*. I'll 'low; but you must recollect that they repersept *principles*."

Still, between you'n' me, notwithstandin' my posishun, I ain't so clear on some pints respectin' the temperance question as what I'd like to be; that is, as to ways and means, and so on. I don't feel quite sartin that prohibishion would settle the matter to once, and moril swazion don't seem to fill the bill exackly; so there I be. Though I've alwers done what I could to carry out both principles.

We've got all sorts o' workers in our Society, and all on 'em is in ded arnest too, I tell ye. There's some that goes round the country annerlizin' all the likker they can git hold on, so 's ter tell what's in it to the meetin's. Seem 's if they found everything under the sun in it—though pizen's the principal ingregient. But la, folks would drink it if it was *all* pizen, and the likker dealers know it, and have been gradually workin' up tew it for some time. I dunno's the pizen argyment is a mite stronger'n any other.

Then agin, some bring in long likker bills and foot 'em up on the black-board, ter show how much money is fooled away, and then go on to kalkerlate how many barrels o' flower and bangle bracelets the same sum would pervide the drunkard's family. This argyment is naterally popular with the wimmin folks.

A good many of our members is strong for Wimmin's Rights; think if wimmin could vote, the hull bizness would be settled ter once by law. But for my part, I hain't much faith in the law; and I'd ruther my men folks would go inter the *front* door to git their drinks than sneak round to the *back* door. It looks more respecktable, somehow.

Last year, when we found that Jonas Hapgood was goin' to Congress, we felt pretty chirk, I tell ye; for he'd alwers been a red-hot temperance and wimmin's rights man, and we thought he'd give us quite a boost. So the Society sent me off post-haste to interview him.

He received me with open arms, as it were, and told me that I could "asshure the sisters of

the 'W. C. T. U. O. C.' that his hull heart was theirn," and so on. He took hold o' my hand and squeezed and *squeezed* it—seemed as if he wouldn't never let go, till finally, for decency's sake, I put an end to it, and says I, laughin' :

"Brother Hapgood, we don't want your heart · couldn't make no airthly use on't; but if you'll pledge yourself to vote for us—that is, in the interests o' Prohibishion and Wimmin's Rights, we shall be perfectly satisfied," says I.

Upon that he hemmed and hawed, and managed to let himself down and out as slick as grease. I couldn't find no fault with his manners, that's a fact! But we made up our minds that men and women don't haul tergether very well in politicks—not as a ginerall thing.

We've got a "Reform Club" in Crabtown, and it's done a power o' good. You see, the way we manage, we set all the reformed drunkards to watchin' one 'nother, and it's a good way. "It takes a thief to ketch a thief," ye know.

And we keep up the interest in our meetin's by securin' for every Sunday night some dretful specimen of a sot, and gittin' him to sign the pledge, and then go up on the platform and tell his experience or sing a song. The more disrepytable he looks, the more 'of a success we consider him; and if we can fetch him in when he is a little mite boozy, so much the better—the moril effect I mean. But arter all's said and done, sometimes I feel about discouraged, and, as I tell Caleb Jason, it doos seem as if the only sure way ter keep folks from drinkin' rum is to *sew up their mouths*; and then they'd pour it into their ears

through a tunnill—fur's I know! It doos beat all!

Did I ever tell you what a time I had with my Mariar?—"Harnsome Mariar" they called her, and she was a beauty, no mistake. She worked for me 'bout three months last year; that's the way I happened to know her. I wouldn't have anybody think that I'm in the habit o' keepin' a hired girl. I sh'd be ashamed and mortified enough! No; when I'm in my usual health I wouldn't take the gift o' the best help in the world! If my mother before me did her own work, and made butter and cheese the year round, ter say nothin' o' soap-makin', house-cleanin', and picklin', and perservin' all extry, with a family o' nine children, I must be smart if I can't dew the work for myself and Caleb Jason and Jerry! With all the modern improvements tew—the patent bakers and bilers and washin'-machines and carpet-sweepers—I'm sure the garret is full on 'em!

But there was a while last spring, when I got all run down, and a good many days I seemed ter need somebody to kinder fill up the garps. Then I heard o' Mariár. I was told that she'd been onfortunit, and had been in the habit o' drinkin' some; but that her husband led her into 't and was to blame for it, and that she hated and dispised the hull thing herself, and had left him for the sake o' tryin' to be a decent woman.

Of course I was interested in her to once, and took her right inter my home and heart, as ye might say.

She was awful lady-like as well as harnsome.

and I felt at fust pretty much as if I was the hired girl. The deacon used to say I treated her like company, and he should think I'd put on the best chiny for her to use every day.

Anyway, I did take a great fancy to her, and I declare I forgot all about her ever drinkin' 'fore she'd been with me a week.

It was goin' on two months arter she come that she went down town of an arrant one day, and come along supper-time no Mariar, and I begun to wonder what kep' her.

Bimeby a hack drove inter the door-yard, and who should pitch out head fust inter the snow but my Mariar! Wall, the driver helped her up onto the piizzer and drove away grinnin'.

I hadn't never seen a drunken man *close-tew*, to say nothin' of a drunken *woman*! I was dumfounded!

I went up to her and touched her shoulder, and says I, "I wanter know if this is *you*, Mariar."

"*Wall, I should smile!*" says Mariar, winkin' one black eye at me. Her bunnit was way offn her head, and she looked dretful rowdyish.

"Ain't ye 'shamed o' yourself?" says I, pullin' on her bunnit and jerkin' her down into a cheer. "Give an account o' yourself. Where've ye been and what a-dewin'?" says I.

"Oh," says she, beginnin' to whimper, "I was took on the street with one o' my *terrible 'spells'* and had to call a hack ter fetch me home."

"Mariar," says I, real sollum, "you've been a drinkin' *sperits*—I smell 'em on your breath!"

"Of course I have!" she says, as bold as brass.

"I had ter go into a store and git a little some-thin' 'fore I could come home. What would you have me dew?"

I looked at her sharp, but I didn't hardly know what to think. I hadn't never heard 'bout no "spells" afore.

"I feel dretful sick now," she says, "and I wish I could go to bed. I shall be all right in the mornin'."

She couldn't walk straight, and she groaned and made a terrible fuss. I helped her into her room and took off her things, and she laid down.

The deacon was away—gone delergate to a Convention—and there wa'n't nobody in the house but me 'n' Jerry—that's my little boy—and Mariar.

I looked in on Mariar 'bout dark and spoke to her, but she seemed all right, so I left her and went off to bed.

In the middle o' the night I happened to wake up, and thought I'd jest go and see how she was; and, wall—there she laid, white as any marble statoo! And when I begged on her to speak and tell me if she was dead, she only rolled up her eyes a little grain; that was all!

I routed up Jerry and sent him off post-haste after the doctor; and in a few minutes he come along puffin' and out o' breath. He give one look at my Mariar and bust out a-laughin'.

"You've sarved me a fine trick," says he, "haulin' me out o' bed this cold night for this 'ere."

"Doctor," says I, layin' my hand on her cold

forrid, "don't joke in the chamber o' death! I can see that she's dyin'!"

"*Dyin'! Drunk*, you mean," says the doctor; "*dead drunk!*"

Then he asked me 'bout it, and I told him how she come home, and how she 'peared and all.

"Where's her bottle?" he asks. "She's been drinkin' all night. Where's her bottle?"

"*Her bottle!*" I screams. "Do you mean ter say that the creatur' has been a-drinkin' and carousin' right here under my nose, and me president of a temperance socierty, and a deacon's wife ter boot!"

"Jest so," says the doctor, dry's a chip. "She's been on a bust, as ye might say, right here in your bedroom, Mis' Jones."

I declare you might 'a' knocked me down with a pin-feather.

Wall, he went on rummagin' round under the bed and pullin' out burow drawers, and bimeby sure enough he *did* find a great quart bottle marked "Borbon Whiskey," and it was empty.

Wall, we give her a bowl o' strong coffy, and the doctor staid with us a little while, bein' I was alone and so kinder upsot. Towards mornin' Mariar begun to come tew.

When she could speak, she turns her great harnsome eyes on to the doctor and says she,

"Doctor, did you ever see so good-lookin' a woman as I be, in sech a miser'ble condishun afore?"

"No, I hope not," says he. She drawed in a long breath. "So young, so beautiful, so onfortinit," she sighs.

"Nothin' o' the kind!" says the doctor. "You're *drunk*, that's all!"

Then she begins to groan and take on, and wring her hands.

"Oh," says she, awful beseechin', "won't you give me somethin' ter make me *forget*!"

"No, I won't!" snaps the doctor. "I'd give ye somethin' ter make ye *remember*, though, if I could!"

She see she wa'n't goin' to make much out o' him, so she turned her face over to the wall and kep' still.

The doctor left us pretty soon, and I made her as comfortable as I could, and then went and laid down.

In about an hour I heard Mariar come stumblin' along out. She come inter my room, and up to my bed, cryin' and wringin' her hands, and says she, "Where's the bottle? Give it to me!"

"You can't have it," says I; "and, besides, there ain't nothin' in it."

"Oh, give me a drop, jest one drop!" she begged, lookin' wild and crazy. I thought o' the rich man in torment, but I was firm as a rock.

"Not a drop!" says I, "not a single, identikle *drop*!"

"*Git me somethin'*, then," she screams in a fury, "and git it *quick*, or I'll tear ye all ter pieces!"

I sprung round and made her some more coffy, extry strong and hot, and she drank 'bout a quart and went off to bed agin.

The next day she was in her right mind, but weak and trembly.

I was all used up. If I hadn't been president o' the "W. C. T. U. O. C.," I'd' a' opened the door and set her out on to the door stun. But as it was, I thought I must consider the looks o' the thing.

Wall, I labored and talked with her the best I knew how, and she seemed sorry and promised ter dew better. She spoke o' the hackman, and asked if it 'twa'n't that good-lookin' Johnson that fetched her home. I told her it was, and she said how she "hoped she didn't look like a fright if she *was* drunk."

I felt it my dooty to tell her that her bunnit was all jammed, and on one-sided, and she seemed mortified enough.

All the forenoon she was res'less and oneasy. I didn't know what to make on her. The doctor charged me to keep her still in the house, but I had hard work to dew it, I tell ye.

Fust she said a walk would make her feel better. She wanted to go down to the post-offis; she was expectin' a letter. I told her Jerry would go down for her.

Then she said as long's she wa'n't able to work, she'd like ter go and call on a friend. I advised her to put it off a day or tew.

Then she begun to howl and dance round the room; said her tooth ached, and she must go ter the dentist and have it out right off, or she should go off the handle.

I put everything I could think on into her mouth—for she couldn't seem to tell which tooth

it was—and finally when I brought out the creosote, she said she felt a little mite better, so we didn't try that. But bimeby she complained o' feelin' faint, and asked me to open the winder jest a crack. I did, and she seemed ter revive right off, and said now if she only had a good cup o' tea she should be all right. I went out inter the kitchen to make the tea—had ter bile the tea-kettle and it took some time—and when I come back, the winder was wide open, and my Mariar wa'n't nowheres to be seen !

I felt awful worked up, and I knew the doctor would blame me. I waited an hour or so, thinkin' she'd come back as quick as she'd got a drink, but she didn't come, so I put on my bunnit and shawl and walked down street.

When I got oppersite the post-offis I met Mariar a-rollin' along towards me, with her bunnit hangin' down her back, and she was singing as loud as she could yell, somethin' she larned to the "Salvation Army" meetin's.

"I am, I am the child of a king !"

There was a pack o' boys to her heels, laughin' and makin' fun, and when they see me, they hol-lered out,

"Mis' Jones ! here's your Mariar ! and she says how she's the child of a *king* ! Look's like one, don't she ?"

"She *acts* more like a child o' the *evil* one !" thinks I, but I didn't say nothin'.

I got her home as quick 's I could and put her to bed agin', and follered out the same program' as before, only this time I didn't call the doctor in.

"I kep' her straight a spell arter this, but I found it wa'n't no use. I tried everything but sewin' up her mouth, and had ter give up. I got so out o' patience finally that I set her a-goin'. I didn't care if I was president of the "W. C. T. U. O. C.;" I was human all the same, and I was all wore out.

So I got her some new clo'es, and paid her fare back to her mother, and I hain't seen nor heard from her sence.

A HOTEL EXPERIENCE.

A good many Crabtown folks take their meals at the hotel through the months of July and August. They ruther do so than go to the beach or mountings. I think, myself, it's most comfortable stayin' ter home the wust o' the hot weather, and doin' your travellin' and visitin' when it's cooler. But la, there's them that would go away somewheres, jest for the name on't, if they suffered eternal torments. It's astonishin' what some folks will endure for the sake o' bein' fashnerble! Lucy Jane was tellin' me how she went to the beach the summer before, and took little Emmy, and she said she never worked so hard nor suffered so much in the hull course of her life.

You see, Emmy had to be kep' dressed up in clean white clo'es, and she couldn't play nor take no comfort, and the consequents was that she got so cross and fretty that her mother couldn't do nothin' with her; and, what time she didn't spend on Emmy was occupied in dressin' and on-dressin' herself—sweatin' and fussin' to look as well as the rest on 'em. So when she got home she was all run down, and the fust thing Jake—that's her husband—said tew her, was, that she looked as if she'd had a fit o' sickness. "And I told him," said Lucy Jane, "how't that was the last time I should go away from home in hot

weather, if I knew myself." So the next summer she thought she'd try a new plan.

You see, she didn't never keep no help (Lucy Jane's a fust-rate housekeeper—smart as a trap), and there's only three on 'em, and I made four; so she says to me, "We'll take our meals to the hotel. Then I shall git red o' the cookin' over a hot stove, and that's all I want."

She asked me what I thought on't, and I told her I run of a notion I should like it. So we begun the very next day.

But there was some things about it I didn't like, and couldn't never git used to, I know. For instance, when we undertook to set down to the table, half a dozen waiters sprung forrerd, and one on 'em grabbed my chair in both hands and hild it 'way back. What ter dew I didn't know, but I looked at Lucy Jane and tried to back inter my chair jest as she did, with the man a holdin' on to it. But fust I knew my lim's was knocked out from under me, and I set down all of a sudden! I thought for a minnit my knees was broke sure. I didn't like it, any way, and I says to Lucy Jane, "When I git so I can't set down ter the table alone, I'll go without eatin'!" says I.

She laughed, and said I'd "git used tew it," but I never did; and if I could sly in and git my seat without that waiter seein' me, I enjoyed my dinner a good deal better. But he was ginerally right on hand; he was an awful wide-awake feller! When I was eatin', of course I had to look somewheres, and if my eye happened to lite on him for a second, he'd spring at me as if his life depended



"WHEN I GIT SO I CAN'T SET DOWN TER THE TABLE ALONE, I'LL GO WITHOUT EATIN'!" SAYS I. (Page 81.)

on sarvin' me. Once he grabbed my plate and was goin' off with it. "See here," says I, "won't you jest let my plate be; I hain't done with it yet."

"Oh," says he, terrible cut up "I beg your pardin!"

"All right," says I. I didn't wanter hurt his feelin's, you know, for he meant well, and after that he was a little more moderate.

That hotel was a master place ter study human natur'.

I found out that a lady to home was a lady to a hotel; but some that called themselves so was anything but ladies, 'cordin' ter my mind. They had a chance to show right out what they was. They'd find no end o' fault with the waiters and turn up their noses at the vittles. They'd order 'bout everything on the bill o' fare, and then pick it all over and leave it in a mess. I couldn't a felt ter dew so more'n I would in a private house.

We see all sorts o' folks. One day a woman come in and set down to our table. She was all decked out in silks and dimonds, and had a bokay pinned on to her stummuck as big as a wash-dish. Lucy Jane said she was a "transient," but after we see how she performed we concluded she was a pig, whatever else she might be. We had lobster salud on the table that day, for a kind of a side dish—there wa'n't a great lot on't, ye know—it was only jest for a relish like pickles or persarves. There was one dish to each end o' the table. Wall, what did that creatur' dew but

put her arm round the one at her end o' the table and dip into it as if she owned it!

When I see that, I says to the lady beside o' me,

"Less' larn her a lesson, and shame her, if there's any shame tew her." "Agreed," says she.

So we took the other dish o' salud—all there was on the table, mind ye—and passed it along tew her.

When the woman see what was comin' she looked kinder puzzled for a minute, then she smiled, as pleased as could be, and what did she dew, but take it, and thank us, bowin' her head till her dimonds fairly dazzled our eyes; and says she, "I'm sure you're real kind; I'm dreadful fond o' lobster salud!" And upon that she fell tew and finished the job in no time! We was tew disgusted to even smile, but there wa'n't no drawbacks to her enjoyment!

Not long after the waiter set a stranger down side o' me. He was a good-natered, respectable-lookin' man—that was all I minded about him at fust; but when he took up the bill o' fare he turned to me in a curi's confidin' kind o' way and says he,

"I can't see to read this 'ere; I wish you'd jest run over the meat list to me." So I begun to read it to him low. "Roast beef, roast lamb," and so on.

He put his hand up to his ear. "Won't you speak a leetle louder?" says he; "I'm ruther hard o' hearin'."

So I went over it agin, so loud that all the folks to the table looked up to see what I was

dewin'. I felt cheap enough, but I could'nt refuse ter help a feller mortal pick out his dinner. He finally stopped me and said he'd have roast beef. "I don't know much about them furrin names—*Fillet o' beef* and *Arly mode*," says he, smilin' good-natered. "Plain roast beef is safest for me, I guess." "Any vegetables?" asks the waiter.

The man handed the bill o' fare to me agin with that same confidin' smile. "Read," says he.

So I read, "Squash, tomarters, green corn—" "Stop!" says he, so quick and sharp that I bit my tongue, and the waiter knocked over a goblet o' water.

"For massy sakes, what is it!" says I, thinkin' the man had lost what few senses he had.

"Nothin'," says he, "only I'll have *corn*! Hain't had none this year, by George! all dried up our way! I'll have *corn* and *turnup*—*that'll dew*," and he leaned back in his chair and smacked his lips.

Wall, the waiter brought his dinner, and I thought my sarvices wouldn't be needed no more, when all to once the man turned to me kinder perplexed like, and says he,

"I wish you'd be good enough to taste o' my pertater; it tastes dretful queer."

I didn't dars ter refuse for fear he'd make talk about it, and I should be still more conspicewous, so I tasted on't.

"Lordy massy," says I, "that's your turnup! Where's your pertater?"

"What?" says he, puttin' his hand to his ear.

"Turnup!" says I. He nodded his head and laughed.

"I thought so," says he, "but I didn't feel quite sure. S'pose like enough real pertater is scarce here, hey? Think I can git some? Oh wall, all right."

I spoke to the waiter and he brought his pertater. Thinks I ter myself, "Mister, you hain't got seven senses enough about ye ter travel round alone; you orter take a boy along to tend tew ye. I've done it 'bout as long as I want 'er." And I begun to eat my dinner in arnest.

Jake was tickled almost ter death. He'd been nudgin' me under the table all the time. Everybody was lookin' at me, and there was some laughin', but I felt as if I wa'n't ter blame and tried to look carm and dignerfied.

When we got through our dinner we went out and left the man I'd had the care on still eatin'. Lucy Jane and I, we alwers had ter wait a spell in the parlor for Jake, while he went into the office to see a friend or transack some business or 'nother, and so we was a settin' there laughin' and talkin' about what had happened, when who should walk in but the very man himself, and he comes over to me, and says with that curi's confidin' smile o' hisn,

"Young woman, I don't know who you be, but you've got a kind heart and a brave one. Do you think I didn't see how embarrissed you was ter the table? Lord love ye, I can see some things without my spe'tacles, if I can't see ter read, nor tell turnup from pertater! And now," says he, fumblin' in his pockets, "I want 'er give

you this to remember me by, and to remind ye of your goodness to a stranger." So sayin', he hauled a little ring out of his pocket, and presented it tew me on the spot.

I was 'shamed enough to think how I'd felt towards him, and I colored up red's a beet.

"I couldn't think o' takin' it, mister," said I, "If I've done anything to help you, you're welcome, and more tew."

"Hut, tut!" said he; I'm older'n you be; play I'm your uncle now, as I wish I was, and take the little ring—come." When I see how he felt I accepted on't with the tears in my eyes, and I've wore it ever sence.

The next day when the ladies plagued me about my "charge," as they called him, I showed 'em the ring, and they agreed that I was well paid.

Jake says it is a *dimond* of the fust water.

THE NEWFANGLED SCHOOL.

When I was down to my niece's last winter, I went with her one day to visit the school where her little boy, James Ed'ard, goes, and—wall, it did beat all !

I know there's been great reforms and improvements in the schools in some respects sence my day, and the best on't is, doin' away with them old barberous punishments. Why, when I was young, a teacher that happened to have a cruel disposishion could turn his school into a regelar inquisishion, if he was a mind tew !

There was some terrible torturin' punishments that was common everywheres. To stand with our heads in the table-drawer ; to stoop over and hold the tip of the finger on the head of a nail in the floor ; settin' on nothin' against the side o' the house ; standin' with our thum's tied to a high nail in the wall, and a lot more that it makes my blood bile to remember !

Why, it was a common practis' with teachers to throw their ruler full drive at any scholar they happened to ketch in mischief. No thanks to the teacher that it didn't kill every time !

But some things was well enough as they *was*, 'cordin' to my way o' thinkin'. Now, didn't it look beautiful and respeckful for the school to rise when a visitor come in ? And how can a class show off to better advantage than standin' in

the floor to recite, in a nice straight line, heads up, hands behind 'em, eyes on the teacher?

I don't know as it is wuth while to mention the water-pail and tin-dipper business, but I do say it was a good institution for all consarned, and I, for one, miss it.

To return to my story, I don't s'pose I should ever thought o' goin' into school that day, if my little nephew's actions hadn't riled me up—as you might say. He was jest in his second term o' school and was all took up with his figgers. Used to add and subtrack in his sleep; lugged his *tables* round with him wherever he went; couldn't hardly eat a meal o' vittles without havin' 'em side of his plate. But I undertook to hear him say 'em one day, and lawful sakes, I couldn't make no head nor tail on't! What he *could* say was all well and good, but what he *couldn't* say I couldn't larn him no more'n 's if I'd spoke in a heathin tongue—not a mite!

I alwers thought 8 and 8 was 16, and that *that* was all there was to it; but it wa'n't enough for him. He said how't his teacher used things to count up by—*splintzes* he called 'em—and he couldn't and wouldn't larn my way.

I argered with him. "Why, see here, James Ed'ard," says I, "8 and 8 is 16, ain't it? All you've got to do is to *remember* it. Can't ye jest remember it?" But I see it wa'n't no kind o' use, and had to give it up. I felt awful galled, though to think I couldn't larn nothin' to a little feller like him.

I goes to his mar, and says I, "Sofrony, that teacher o' James Ed'ard's ought to be looked after.

The idee that a young one can't larn his tables without a mess o' splintzes and things—redicker-lous!" says I. "Why don't they jest say 'em over'n over till they larn 'em, as we used to? Massy sakes! I bet I've said them tables over to myself more'n ten thousand times if I have once! That's the way to do it."

"Yes, I know," says Sofrony, "that was the old-fashioned way o' doin'; but I believe they think that was tew mecanikle. Oh, there's lots o' newfangled notions nowadays, Aunt Ruth! But I tell ye what, you and me 'll go into school to-morrer, and see jest how and all about it. What do ye say?"

"Wall," says I, "I don't care if I do. I alwers was interested in the cause o' edication; but I shan't encourage no upstart notions nor swaller no nonsense."

So we went, and I can't begin to tell all we see and heard.

In the fust place, the school-house was nice enough for Queen Victory's children; all fitted up in great shape with steam-pipes and ventilators and maps and picters and so on. I couldn't help contrastin' it with the little old yeller school-house at home, with its slantin' floors and rough pine benches. Then, agin, I remembered how it used to be when company come into school. How kinder flustered and bashful the children alwers felt, and the teacher, too, for that matter. But la! they didn't mind no more about Sofrony and me, than if we'd been two flies come buzzin' in at the winder.

"Ladies," says the teacher, after she'd showed

us some seats, "we are jest now engaged on our exercises in 'Rithmetic."

We see the children was all huddled round a long table littered over with what I took to be the *splintzes* James Ed'ard had told about, and piles of common pebble-stones.

The splintzes wa'n't nothin' under the sun but little bits o' wood cut all of a size somethin' like toothpicks. Wall, the boys and girls was a-stand-in' round this table, as I said, and when the teacher asked 'em a question, they made a unanimus dive for them splintzes and stones and begun to count and lay 'em in piles afront of 'em.

James Ed'ward got his done fust, and he raised his hand and waved it and snapped it, as if he was crazy to let everybody know how smart *he* was.

The teacher waited a few minutes so's to give 'em plenty of time ; then she called for the answer and they all yelled it out together, loud enough to split your head open. There was quite a number of questions, and after they got through I says to the teacher,

"I hope you'll excuse me, marm, but I should like to ask if it wouldn't be more comfortable for you and the scholars—save your narves and heads, as it were—if you'd have 'em larn these lessons in their seats by studyin' of 'em, and then come out in the floor in a harnsome line and recite 'em quiet and orderly, like rashional bein's. I jest want to inquire," says I.

The teacher colored up as red's a beet and I was afraid she was mad, but she answered me very perlite,

"Our method is new to you, perhaps, and seems odd?"

"Yes, it does, that's a fact;" says I. "It seems like makin' a great fuss about nothin'."

"I hope you will think better of it by and by, when you have obsarved its workin's," says she. I thought I shouldn't probably do no sech thing, but I didn't say so.

Wall, after they took their seats the teacher went round and give every scholar a picter. I see James Ed'ard's was a picter of a man struttin' along in the rain with an umbrell over his head. A lot o' folks was lookin' after him, and underneath was printed, "*Jonas Hanway and His Umbrell.*"

The teacher called James Ed'ard's name fust, and he marched out into the floor as big as life. He looked at his picter a minute and then he begun—he pitched his voice 'way up high—and says he,

"I have a picter of a man with an umbrell; I see some folks starin' after him; three girls and a man, and a boy with a baskit over his head. The man feels big because he's got the only umbrell in town, and their starin' at him so only makes him feel all the bigger. I guess he's a stingy old chap or he'd let somebody go under along of him—looks like it, anyway. Go it, old Skinflint!"

Of course the scholars all laughed, and the teacher turned to explain.

"You see, ladies," says she, "this exercise brings out individooal thought. You obsarve.

also, that they're allowed perfect freedom of expression ; we make all corrections afterwards."

"They *do* express themselves powerful free, that's a fact, marm," says I. "And what do you call this exercise?"

"Oh, it's a part of our system of 'object teachin','" says she.

"Hum, I know all about that, jest like a book. I've had it afore. That man's the good samaritan. He was the best o' the lot. He told the landlord to take the poor tramp in to his hotel and do up his sores in mutton tallow, and give him everything good to eat—gingerbread and candy and peanuts, you know," lookin' round at the other boys, "and he'd foot the bills. He was a brick—you bet!"

And so they went on—a dozen or more of 'em, and it did seem as if each one tried to say somethin' more redickerlous than the rest. I couldn't help laughin' if I died for't, but I didn't approve on't by no manner o' means.

The singin' master come in before they got through with the picters, but they left right off and hustled them away in a hurry. They was all smilin' and noddin' to him as if they was dretful glad to see him, and he seemed fond of them, and talked to 'em as if he'd been their par.

"Now," says he "here's the 'Thanksgivin' Song'—you all know about Thanksgivin'?"

"You bet we do!" says one, and "yes, yes!" all over the room.

"Wall, then," says he "you must sing this piece extry nice to-day," and after they'd sung it he pats one little girl on the head and looks

round on 'em all smilin', and says, "Well done, well done! How would you like to play you're all my children, and spread a great big table right here, and have our thanksgivin' all together?"

"Oh, yes sir!" says the little girl, eager as can be, "and play that you was the par and teacher was the mar, and we was all your little girls and boys!"

"Splendid!" says the singin' master; but I noticed he seemed kinder cut up, and he set 'em to singin' agin as quick 's he could convenient. We found out afterwards that he was payin' 'tention to the teacher, and I guess them scholars knew it!

After he'd gone, they had one more exercise, and that was all. Each scholar made up a question in 'rithmetic, and some on 'em was remarkable good, I must say. The only trouble was, that they got noisy and out of order, same's they did about everything else. They didn't seem to be afraid o' nobody nor nothin', and they was all wide-awake and sharp and keen as razors, every one of 'em. I couldn't help bein' interested in the little rogues, and I should admire to know how they all turned out when they grew up.

This was one little girl's example: "If I weigh 48 lbs. and my grandmar weighs 150 lbs. and Mary Jane Cross 50 lbs., what is the sum of our weight? Answer—248 lbs."

"But I don't weigh 50 lbs.," speaks up Mary Jane, pert as you please. "I only weigh 47 lbs."

"I do," says another; "I weigh jest 50 lbs. exactly."

"And I weigh twenty," says another. They all

begun to tell their own weight and their grandmother's and everybody's else, all hollerin' together.

The teacher couldn't make herself heard till she rung her bell loud and long. Then she spoke up to 'em pretty sharp, and they simmered down wonderful quick, I must say, considerin'.

When they'd got through with all their doin's and exercises, I riz up in my seat, and says I, "If you hain't no objections I should like to ask your scholars a few common-sense questions," says I.

Sofrony she pinched my arm to stop me, but I didn't mind nothin' about her. I had my suspicions that there was some things outside o' their new method wuth knowin' that hadn't been 'tended to in that school, and I meant to show that teacher and them scholars that I knew a thing or two, if I was edicated before they was born.

The teacher seemed very willin' to 'commodate me, and says,

"Oh, sartinly, ask as many questions as you please."

"In the fust place," says I, "can I have the class come out in the floor and toe this 'ere crack? I do think it's an awful lazy way for 'em to recite in their seats."

"Sartinly, sartinly," says she again. So she called 'em all out into the floor, and after they'd tumbled over each other and stepped on one 'nother's toes, and pushed and hauled awhile, I got 'em into somethin' like a straight line.

"Now, children," says I, "'tend to me. Who made you?"

"*Adam and Eve! God! George Washington!*" they shouted before the question was fairly out of my mouth.

I turned round and *looked* at the teacher, but I didn't say nothin'.

"It was rather onexpected, perhaps," she begun to say.

"They orter know who made 'em *any time!*" says I, short's pie-crust.

"Children," says I next, can you repeat the Ten Commandments?"

This time they didn't try to answer; they jst looked at one 'nother and squirmed round and grinned.

"Perhaps the lady will kindly repeat 'em to you," says the teacher very perlite, but I could see that she thought she'd got me."

"I didn't come here to teach," says I, "that's *your* business. I'm simply findin' out what these scholars *know* and what they *don't* know."

Wall, I asked 'ern a number o' questions, and they couldn't answer one on 'em proper; they couldn't even repeat the Ten Commandments.

"There's one thing we *can* do," says I when I got through with my questions, "we can show 'em what perlitiness is, can't we, children? Now all put your hands behind ye and make your manners—*so*," says I, standin' up and makin' a harnsome bow. "I want you to do it all together, unanimous, and then turn and go to your seats still's mice," and I made 'em do it; but I had to work a while fust. They'd never done it before in their lives, you know.

When I set down the teacher smiled, and says

she, "You ought to go into the business, madam." Now, wasn't it real nice and forgivin' in her to say that after I'd took her down so? I think she must have had an oncommon good disposition anyway.

When she'd dismissed the school and we was left alone I shook hands with her, and says I, "I'm obleeged to ye for 'lowin' me so much liberty with your scholars, and you must excuse me if I've hurt your feelin's. Don't be discouraged; you're young and you'll improve. Only give the Ten Commandments and a few other things a *leetle* more prominence and pay more 'tention to *order*—you *do* lack order—that's your great failin'. Why, woman alive with sech bright, affectionate children, you ought to be able to keep *perfeck* order."

"Madam," says she, straightenin' up a little haughty, "I beg leave to insist that my scholars are under *perfeck control*. You mistake the *freedom* of our system for *disorder*, and you make a *great mistake*. I do assure you."

"You can assure me all you want to," says I, "but you can't deny that them children have acted like *Sam Hide* this forenoon, now can ye?" says I.

"I've no acquaintance with the boy you mention," says she, "but one thing is sartin, these same scholars that you find so bright and wide-awake to-day would appear only ordinary under the restrictions of the old method."

Sofrony she'd been nudgin' me and makin' signs to me to come along for some time, so now I says,

“Wall, wall, never mind. Let’s shake hands agin and part friends, and good day to you.”

She said “Good day” as pleasant as could be, and we come away.

“Sofrony,” says I as soon as we was out o’ hearin’, them *be* the smartest set o’ boys and girls I ’bout ever come acrost, that’s a fact. I wa’n’t a goin’ to give in to *her*, ye know, but *between you ’n me*, I shouldn’t wonder if their *new method* was a pretty good one after all, only they *had* ought to learn ’em the Ten Commandments ; I’ll stick to that.”

“Stick to it then all you want to,” snapped Sofrony, “but for my part I’m all wore out, and I wish to massy I hadn’t a gone ! De let’s hurry home and git a good cup o’ tea !”

SHE GOES TO THE DENTIST.

I can't say I like these ere modern improvements in dentistry. Years ago, old Doctor Dwight did some work on my teeth, and I remember I felt, when he got through, as if it had been kind of a mutual thing, and he'd suffered a'most as much as I had myself.

He pulled out one tooth and filled another, and—wall, the fillin' didn't hurt much; only the scrapin' and borin' ruther tried my narves. But on the whole, 't want a great sight wuss than cleanin' up a kittle that plum sass or hasty pud-din' has burnt onto. But the *pullin'*, *that* was a different thing! I hild on to the chair with all my might and main, and the old doctor he hild on to the tooth, and when he give the final jerk, as you might call it, it was a wonder he didn't hist me and the chair and all clean up through the sky light! He would if the chair hadn't been fastened down pretty strong.

I remember I give one groan, enough to wake the dead, and there stood the old doctor a sweatin' and puffin', but holdin' up my tooth in triumph! Then he and me, we congratulated one 'nother, and I went away feelin' that we was friends and feller bein's.

That's a good many years ago, as I said, but the other day I had 'casion to go to the dentist's agin, and as Doctor Dwight is dead, I went to his

successor, naterally. The new dentist is a harnsome, smart lookin' young feller, as one could wish to see, and he 'come out o' his little room, smilin' and hummin' a tune. His shirtbosom and wris'buns was as white as snow, and he looked spick and span all over. He was a *master* nice, clean lookin' feller, and I took tew him to once.

Wall, he said how't he could tend right tew me, so I laid off my bunnit and went in and set down in his big chair, and watched him while he was gittin' ready for me. He was goin' to dew the fillin' fust, he said ; so he went round from one drawer to another, collectin' his things together. Fust he brought out a great tray kivered with little steel instruments that looked jest like croshay hooks, of different sizes ; then a little box o' gold leaf and a thin sheet of injy rubber.

He hummed away at his tune all the time, and seemed as happy as if he was gittin' ready to go and see his girl. I told him so, and he laughed but didn't say nothin', and I wondered whuther or no he was a married man.

When he'd got all his tools and things laid out handy he brought along a couple of nice, clean, white napkins and laid 'em in my lap.

"Oh la, now, you take them away, and I'll use my handkerchif," says I,— "save jest so much washin' ye know."

"Oh," says he, smilin', "that's no consequence ; my wife does her own washin'."

So he *was* married, and he didn't care how hard his wife worked, nuther !

Wall, the next thing he did was to shove a curis lookin' machine up alongside o' my chair,

and after examinin' my teeth a minnit he *actew-ally* put the little end o' that machine into my mouth and workin' it with one foot, begun to drill away at my tooth as if I'd been a stun or a statu'!

As quick as it begun to grind and buz, I twitched his hand away, machine and all, and says I,

"Look a' here, young man, I ain't use'ter bein' run by machinery, and I want to inquire into this a little. How does your machine know when to stop, and so on? What's to hender it's goin' clear through me, as you might say?"

He smiled as innercent as a baby, and says he, "Oh, I'll look out for it; it shan't do any harm, I promise you!"

Then he went on to explain how it was the greatest invention of the age. Said "all the leadin' dentists in the country used 'em," and so forth.

"If that's the case," I says "go ahead. I'll try to be accommodatin', but you must leave off singin' and tend right to your machine every minnit, and I do hope you'll bear in mind that it's a human cretur, and not a stun, that you're a drillin' of."

He promised he would and in a few minnits he had my tooth ready to fill. Then come somethin' wust of all yit. He picks up that little square sheet of injy rubber, claps it inter my mouth quick's a wink, and stretches it over my lower jaw somehow, so that only the tooth he was workin' on, stuck through, and fastens it down with a sort of clamp.

At fust I couldn't breathe nor swaller—much less speak—but I managed to let him know by signs and fistin' what I thought on't, and he begun to explain agin.

"It's all right, I assure you, madam," says he, very perlite, "and you won't be inconvenyenced after you git a little 'customed to it."

"Customed to it!" thinks I to myself, "I shall die fust!" and I should a' gone into histericks, but I couldn't laugh with that thing in my mouth, so I tried to carm down and think I could stan' it if other folks could. But I never suffered so much in the hull course o' my life; and I can't say I was in actewal pain nuther! The fact was, I was *mad*! I wa'n't willin' to be run by machinery, as I said afore, nor to have my mouth filled up with injy rubber or any pizen thing he see fit to stuff in! But after all, I blamed sience the most. What bizness had sience to go and invent sech disagreeable, disrespeckful ways o' doin' things!

Wall, that young man worked away half an hour as if he enjoyed every minnit of it, if I didn't, and I tried to be patient, knowin' it couldn't last forever. I was beginnin' to git into quite a resigned and comfortable frame o' mind, when all to once he stops work and pricks up his ears to listen.

Sure enough, there was a hand orgin out in the street, an oncommon good one, too, and it was playin' a tune from the opery of "Patience."

"How 'propriate," thinks I to myself, "that's jest what I'm in need of—*patience*."

Then, what does that dentist do but drop his

croshay hook and pick up his hat in a hurry. "Excuse me one moment, madam," he says to me, "and don't you on *any account* move your head or stir while I'm gone; I'll be right back." Upon that, he runs down stairs and leaves me a settin' there with my mouth propped wide open, wonderin' what had struck him all of a sudden.

Wall, I waited five minnits by the clock and he didn't come back. I begun to feel worried about him; thought p'raps he'd fell in a fit, or broke his neck or somethin'. But bimeby, I left off worryin' about *him* and began to think ex-cloosively of *myself*! Oh, how tired I was! My neck ached and my jaws ached, and I was in cramps and pains all over! I didn't dare to move much, for I didn't know what mischief it might do, ye know; but I did move a little mite, and then I set and waited fifteen minnits or so more, till I couldn't stan' it no longer. Then I kicked over his old drillin' machine and the tray of croshay hooks, and got up and looked out o' the winder.

As true as I'm a livin' woman, there stood that dentist on the sidewalk smokin' a cigar and watchin' a performin' bear! The hand organ was still playin' lively, and there was quite a crowd o' men and boys 'gethered round, but there wa'n't one o' the lot enjoyin' himself so much as my dentist!

Oh, I was ravin', *tearin'* mad! I'd a gin a dollar bill in a minnit to been able to speak to him, but I couldn't ye know, on account o' the injy rubber, so I took my sun-shade and pounded on the winder like all possesst.

When he turned and see me, he bust out a

laughin' ! I s'pose I did look redickerlous enough but wan't it aggravatin' !

As quick as he come in I pulled at the old injy rubber and tore round, till he see it had got to come out to once. My face was hot as fire, and I guess he suspicioned he'd ketch it whenever I *could* speak, for he was the longest while gettin' on't out o' my mouth—tellin' me all the time in that smooth way o' his'n how sorry he was and so on.

"Madam," says he, kinder mournful like, "I've been subjeck to sech *fits of abstrackshun* for a number o' years, and my wife she's beginnin' to feel worried about me."

I told him I should think she would, and advised him as a friend to take somethin' for 'em right off, or they might git him into trouble, and he promised me he'd do so. He urged me to stop and have the job finished.

"Why," says he, "I'll willingly dew it for nothin' ruther'n have you go off so."

"Young man," says I, "I'm 'bleeged to ye, but if you'd pull out every tooth in my head for nothin', I wouldn't stay five minnits longer. I'm all wore out, and the sooner I git home the better."

That was all I said. I hadn't the heart to scold him after I heerd about *them fits*. "Poor cretur," thinks I to myself, "I don't wonder your wife feels worried about ye."

THE SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY.

Cousin Tripheny she went down to old Concord this summer, and 'tended the School o' Filosofy; so when she come back she was chuck full on't. Between you'n me I don't believe she had much idee of what it all meant, but she thought it was a great thing, any way, and she talked so much about it to the sewin' circle and the litterary meetin's that she created quite a fury, and bimeby nothin' would dew but we must have a *Wimmin's* School o' Filosfy there in Craney Holler. So one afternoon Tripheny and Mis' Giddins they come down to my house together to talk it over with me; they wanted me to jine; in fact, they invited me to be the "*deen*" or *deeness*, same's Perfessor Harris was, you know.

"All these things have a *head*," says Tripheny, "and to my mind, you, Ruth Ann, are pereminently suited to fill that high posishion."

"I declare I'm obleeged to ye," says I (for I did 'preciate the honor and no mistake), "but I don't feel as if I was fit. I'm free to confess that I don't know nothin' about the things they discussed on to them meetin's this summer more'n the cat does. I tried faithful to read some o' the lecturs reported in the newspapers, but I had to give 'em up. I think's like enough they was too deep for me;

but I wouldn't be afraid to ventur' my repertation as a sensible woman, that there wa'n't one single practical idee to the bottom on 'em! And what's the use o' breakin' your neck to go so awful deep, when there aint nothin' wuth goin' after!"

"Oh, wall," says Tripheny, sniffin' and fidgetin' round in her chair, "if you feel *that* way, we can't do anything with *you*, of course, but I'm real disappointed. Ruth Ann, I *am* disappointed!"

She looked so sorter took down and reproachful that I felt bad for her. So after thinkin' a minnit—"See here," says I, "if you'll le'mme select some of your subjects I dunno' but what I'll consent to sarve, and be your what-ye-may-call-it—*Deeness*—is it?"

Upon that they both brightened up. "Agreed, of course," they says; "now lets perceed to business."

So we went on to consider who should belong to it.

Tripheny said it was best to *invite* all them we wanted to have jine, so's to keep out "the rabble."

"There wa'n't no rabble to the Concord School, I tell *you*," says she. "And furthermore there can't be no young girls; that is, no *good lookin'* ones. There wa'n't a single decent lookin' woman in the hull Concord School! *I* was the best lookin' one o' the lot; and you know I haint got no beauty to brag on," she said, laughin'. (She *is* mortal homely.)

"If that's the case," says I, "p'raps *I* ain't homely enough."

"Oh la, you'll dew," says Mis' Giddins.

"*That's* all right," says Tripheny.

They wa'n't so complimentary as they might be, but I didn't care for that ; I had an object in view.

" But I dunno," says I, hangin' back ; " I ain't willin' to shet out the young and harnsome ; they'd orter have priveleges same's other folks. My idee is, that harnsome girls is naterally jest as bright and sensible as homely ones. The trouble is, we set sech high vally on beauty, that we're apt to think nater can't afford to give brains along with it, and so don't look for 'em. Better give the pretty girls a chance," says I.

" Dew have everything your own way then !" snapped Tripheny, kinder out o' patience. Then she laughed and shrugged up her shoulders, and says she,

" After all, I ain't one mite afeared any harnsome girls 'll want to jine—bein's there ain't no men folks in the consarn."

" That's so," says Mis' Giddins.

Wall, we went ahead and orginized, and the upshot on't was, that we held our fust meetin' the next Tuesday evenin' in the old yeller school-house at the middle o' the town.

As Tripheny was the founder of the school she picked out the fust subject and handed it round aforehand, so's' all the members might be perpared. Her subject was "*Molecules.*" When I heard it I says, "*Molecules!* for the land's sake, what be *them* ? Some kind o' animals I s'pose ; but who knows anything about 'em ?"

" You're mistakened ; they ain't animals," says

Tripheny, shettin' her lips together, and lookin' awful knowin'.

"I dew hope and trust, Tripheny," says I, "that you've chose a good *moral* subjeck." (To tell the truth, I hain't no great opinion of Tripheny's judgment.)

She tossed up her head a good mind to be mad, and says she,

"It was one o' the fust Coneord subjecks, anyway; and I guess what's good enough for *them* orter be good enough for *us*!"

"All right," says I, "only I'm afraid you'll have to dew most o' the talkin' and explatteratin' yourself. Seem's if some more common subjeck would a' been better for the fust."

"No sech thing!" she says. "Let 'em study it up. It'll dew 'em good to use their brains a little! They can all go to the dictionary, and there's other books. Then, some on 'em has got college edjicated husbands; *they* orter know somethin' about molecules," says she.

Wall, I didn't make much preperation for the meetin' myself; it wa'n't necessary. I was the *deeness*, you know, and my main business was to set on the platform and keep 'em in order, &c. I wa'n't obliged to diskuss unless I wanted to.

When the meetin' was fairly throwed open, I called on the Square's wife to speak fust, and stated that afterwards I hoped the others would all feel free to take part and arger and diskuss promisc'ous.

When I set down, the Square's wife riz up and crossed her arms over her stummuck, awful im-

posin' and dignerfied, and begun jest as she alwers does to the prayer meetins !

"My dear brutheren and sisters, I feel——" but here Tripheny stopped her by givin' her a tremenjus nudge.

"*Molecules ! molecules !*" whispered Tripheny, to remind her where she was and what a dewin'.

The Square's wife looked at her savage as a meat ax, and begun agin jest as she did afore, exackly.

"My dear brutheren and sisters, I feel as if the subjeck afore us this evenin' was a very *momentuous* one—*very*."

Tripheny drawed in a long breth, and everybody leaned forrard and listened.

"I've give this subjeck all the attention that my multiflorious dooties would allow, and I confess I find it a deep one—an awful deep one."

As nigh as I can make out, molecules is *minutical* small ; smaller than a grain o' sand or a mote in a sunbeam, and a muskeeter's eye is big 'long side o' one ! Fact is, you can't *see* a molecule, nor begin ter, not with the naked eye."

Here she stopped a minnit to take a pinch o' snuff, and Mis' Deacon Jones broke in :

"If that's the case," said she, sniffin' up her nose contemptewous, "I shouldn't consider 'em wuth mentionin'. Any thing you can't see at all with the naked eye must be *pooty small pertaters*. There's plenty o' bigger things to talk about ; why not take an animal with some size tew it ?"

The Square's wife give her a witherin' look. "It's plain to be seen," says she, "that you are mournfully ignorant of the hull subjeck. There-

fore and consequentially you undervally it. But small things ain't to be despised by no manner o' means. Have you forgot how St. Paul says, '*Take care o' the minutes and the hours will take care o' themselves*'? and agin the butiful poim that begins, '*Little drops of water*'? More 'n all, have you forgot (though it's doubtful if you ever knew) the proverb, '*Many a little makes a mickle*,' which is Latting for *much*! That's it: Many molecules make a big thing. Besides, and moreover, molecules is *in* every-thing."

She stopped to take another pinch o' snuff (she's an *awful* snuff-taker), and Tripheny thinkin' she'd said 'bout enough picks it up and goes on.

"There's one very sollum thought occurs to my mind in connection with this subjeck," says she, "and that is that the soul o' man, as many believe, was originally a molecule—a mere speritooal atom as it were—and now see the grand thing it has growed to be!"

"Hum!" says Mis' Deacon Jones, "that's easy enough to believe; some on 'em hain't growed a bit to this day! But when you undertake to tell me that them ere molecules is *in everything*, I can't swaller it, *and what's more, I won't!*" says she, gittin' excited.

I rapped on the table, and says very firm, "Let us obsarve becomin' order and dignerty in this 'ere school, ladies."

"Wall," says the deacon's wife, carmin' down a grain, "I should like to ask the Square's wife one question."

“Sartingly,” says the Square’s wife dretful condescendin’; “as many as you please.”

“Do you mean to tell me, then, that there’s moelcules in my currant jell that I had ter bile three mortal hours by the clock (for the currants was too ripe, and it wouldn’t jell a minnit sooner)? I s’pose now that there jell is full o’ them creturs, alive and kickin’?” says she, sarcastic. “I s’pose no amount o’ bilin’ would kill ’em?”

“Ondoubtedly,” says the Square’s wife, “for ’cordin to science they’re *alwars* in motion, and if they was *biled dead*, how could they move? You *can’t kill ’em*.” So sayin’ she looked round in triumph.

“Wall, then,” says the deacon’s wife, most a cryin’ “all I’ve got to say is that they’re horrid pesky creturs, and no credit to science nor Providence nuther!”

That remark did sound kind o’ unchristian for a deacon’s wife to make, didn’t it? We was all shocked, and Tripheny jumped up in a hurry and says she :

“Massy sakes alive! you don’t think molecules is real *animals*, dew ye? Why, don’t the dictionary say distinckly that they’re particles o’ matter, and they haint no signs of life about ’em, only they have motion, that’s all! ’Twouldn’t hurt ye if you should swaller a mote from a sun-beam, would it? Wall, molecules is jest the same, only smaller.”

“Oh, la, now, I dew feel relieved!” says Mis’ Jones. “I s’posed they was somethin’ like *em-mets*, and emmets I hate wuss’n pizen? But *some folks*,” with a meanin’ nod towards the

Square's wife, "orter know a *leetle grain more* before they undertake to instruct their nabors."

The Square's wife she never took no notice; she just set down and pulled out her knittin' and went to work.

There wan't many more speakers, and when they got done we wound up with a kind of sociable pow-wow, and everybody got to feelin' pleasant and happy as could be.

When the clock struck nine I riz up and pounded on the table.

"Ladies o' the Craney Holler School o' Philosophy," says I: "The subjeck to be discussed at our next session is one of an altogether different natur' from that we have considered to-night; to wit, namely—'*Winmin's Extravagance*: and be the Men to Blame for't?'" They all seemed to think favorable, for they clapped their hands and looked dretful pleased.

Then we ajourned.

THE DEACON'S WIFE SPEAKS.

At the close of the fust meetin' of the "Wimmin's School o' Filosofy," you'll remember that I 'nounced the next subjeck as "Wimmin's Extravagance; and wherein be the men to blame for't?"

Wall, the deacon's wife she come right down the next day to see me and talk it over. She was 'mazin' exercised about it.

"Ruth Ann," says she to me, shakin' her head dubious, "I'm awful 'fraid this ere school of ourn is goin' to make a rumpus twixt us and the men-folks, ain't you? Specially if we go to layin' blame onto 'em for any of our doin's, they'll feel dretful crossgrained and hard agin us, and massy knows 'tain't any tew easy to git along with *some* on 'em now. I, for one, don't say for dewin' anything to stir 'em up and git 'em mad. The deacon don't 'prove o' this school no way. He's been pickin' out chapters for family devotions this fortnight all bearin' on female submission, and so on. This mornin' I spunked up and told him I didn't think the 'postle Paul's opinion o' wimmin's duty amounted to *shucks*."

"What does an old bachelor know 'bout wimmin?" says I.

"'And what does a pack of *old maids* know 'bout *men*!'" says he, firin' up. "'Wan't that real mean, Ruth Ann?"

I laughed. "Mis' Jones," says I, "you might a told him that we know all we wanten know 'bout men, unless it's better! But we needn't fret; our school ain't a wimmin's rights consarn by no manner o' means, and you can explain to him, that we should a' invited the men to jine, only we felt kinder modest; thought we could do better by ourselves; same's female prayer meetin', you know. How could we git up and say anything in the presence of our *sooperiors*?" says I.

"Oh now you're makin' fun o' the men!" says the deacon's wife, laughin', "and I don't blame you. They're a consaited, pigheaded lot! and I will say it, if *I be* a married woman!" says she, lookin' over her shoulder to make sure the deacon wa'n't nowheres round.

"There's lots o' good men in the world," says I, carm and candid.

"Oh, the deacon's *good* enough, for that matter, but I'd ruther he'd be a little more *agreeable*, if he wa'n't so awful good!"

"That's a little mite hard on the deacon," says I, laughin'.

"I don't care if 'tis!" she snapped. "It's the truth, any way!" Then she went on with her knittin' and seemed to feel better.

"This subjeck you've picked out is a frustrate one," she resoomed bimeby; "but there's a good many ways o' lookin' at it, I guess."

"Yes," says I; "extravagance is a word that's been misapplied and 'bused about as much as any word in the English language. Mean, stingy folks call that extravagant that ain't only jest

comfortable ; and then agin what's extravagant for the poor to do, ain't only jest right and proper for rich folks ; don't you see ?

" Yes, I dew," says the deacon's wife, " and that's what riles me so when the deacon insists on *my* skimpin' and pinchin' as a dooty. If we wan't well off, with money in the bank, I wouldn't say a word. But Ruth Ann, I tell *you*—I wouldn't dars to say it to everybody—the way that man contrives to *save* does beat all !

" Sometimes his notions is laughable ! The hat he wore when we was married, and for a good many years afterwards too, is up in the garret 'long with other old things that's laid there this thirty year, for he never 'lows me to give a thing away ; says everything comes in course *some* time. But this hat is a white stovepipe—jest sech a hat as Yankee Jonathan always wears in Mister Nast's picters. I spose it looked all right in the day on't—but *now*—oh, dear !

" Wall, every spring in house cleanin' time, when I'm up garret puttin' things to rights up *he* comes reg'lar, to make sure all his old sculch is safe ! His stove funnels and cracked cider jugs, and old cart wheels—oh, and I'd o'rter mentioned long with the hat, a black silk vest with picters of George Washin'ton all over it. It used to be his uncle's, and he left it there when he died ; it's all ragged now, a sight to see.

" Wall, year after year, as sure as the spring and house cleanin' comes round, the deacon follers me up garret, and the fust thing he spies out is ginerally the old hat. He picks it up, puts it on his head and turns to me and says, very severe :

“ ‘Betsey, what’s the matter with *this ere hat*? Why is it laid one side?’

“And I laugh invariable and say, ‘Why, John Henry, how forgetful you be! don’t you know that ’ere was your weddin’ hat? it’s been up here this thirty year.’

“ ‘Is that so?’ says he, takin’ it off and lookin’ at it. ‘But I don’t see as anything ails it, good enough to wear to the barn any way.’

“So he puts the redickerlous thing on his head and goes on rummagin’ round.

“Bimeby he comes acrost the old vest hangin’ in a corner, takes it down, looks it over careful and finally puts that on tew, top of his stri-ped frock, and comes to me and says agin severer than ever:

“ ‘I tell ye now, Betsey, once for all, we can’t afford to throw away good clo’es, and I *won’t have it!* What’s the matter o’ this ere vest?’

“Then, Ruth Ann, I look up at him standin’ there—you know how fat he is, and what a figger—with that short waisted rag of a vest buttoned acrost his stummuck, and his stri-ped frock hangin’ down, his blue overhalls tucked into his boots, and that weddin’ hat set one side of his head—and I jest laugh, and screech, and holler, till I’m ’bout givn out; and the deacon gits mad and tarin’, and like enough the white stovepipe rolls off on to the floor, or the valooable vest splits out somewheres, and that tickles me all the more!

“Then the deacon sets tew and lecturs me, and ginerally winds up by sayin’:

“ ‘A pooty deacon’s wife *you* be! you’ve got ’bout as much dignerty as a four year old colt!’

"But I can't help it," says she ; " it's enough to make Lot's wife laugh, after she was turned into the pillar of salt !"

When we had got done laughin' the deacon's wife wiped her eyes and turned to me real serious. " Ruth Ann," she says, " I come over a' purpose to see about that next meetin' of oun. I tell you I ain't a-goin' to let the Square's wife set down on me agin—and don't you forgit it ! I reckon I know as much about this subjeck as what she does. But there, I've done all the talkin' so fur, now I'll keep still and give you a chance."

" I reckon," says I, " that a good many folks is accused o' bein' extravagant that ain't so at all. There's them Dodge girls on the hill ; you know how stylish and well dressed they alwers look, specially Mariar, the oldest one. Wall, she's harnsome as a picter' to begin with—got one o' them nateral pink and white complexions that'll wash and bile, as you might say, and a figger that don't need no five dollar corsets to fetch it into shape, and whatever she puts on she looks dressed out to kill, don't she ? I've heard the Square's Lizy Jane say many a spiteful thing 'bout Mariar Dodge's extravagance, when the fact is, Mariar never pertends to wear anything better'n a cash-meer in winter or a pretty muslin in summer."

" But it takes silks and satings and all creation to rig out Lizy Jane, and then she looks more like a feather bed with a string tied round the middle than anything else. Though she ain't to blame for her *looks* as I know on."

" No," says the deacon's wife, " only its a pity she can't be a leetle more pleasant in her ways, to

kinder make up for bein' so homely. But I've noticed, that, as a general thing, the wuss folks *look*, the more disagreeable they *act*. Now, I never see a hunchback in my life, that wa'n't as consaited and hateful as he could be."

"There may be some truth in that," says I; "I've often thought so myself. But let's consider the last part of our subjeck,—'wherein be the men to blame?'"

"Oh, wall," says the deacon's wife, rollin' up her knittin' and gettin' ready to go, "I guess perhaps we *married wimmin* hadn't better arger that pint much. We'll kinder *talk round* it and *lead up tew it*—as it were—and then you and Seraphine and the rest o' the young girls can take hold. Not that I'm *afraid*, but, as I said afore, I don't want to create no hard feelin's among the men."

When she got to the door, though, she looked back, and says she :

"All the same, Ruth Ann, if the Square's wife happens to pitch into the men Tuesday night, I shall foller soot ! She ain't a-goin' to git ahead o' me *this* time, not if the deacon sues for a divorce the very next mornin' !"

MODERN IMPROVEMENTS.

Some o' these ere modern improvements don't amount to much, 'cordin' to my way o' thinkin'. But it is wonderful, and no mistake, how many inventions and machines there is now-days. I think's likely the time is comin' when machines 'll do all the work and *run themselves!* And what a heaven upon 'arth that will be for lazy folks, won't it! Haymakers can lay on the grass then, and drink molasses and water *all* the time, and hired girls can look out o' the winder and chew gum from mornin' till night. But I'm kinder old fashioned, and these new fangled things put me out and plague me enough sight more 'n they help me.

I don't want no patent coffy-pots nor meat-bakers nor steamers. No, nor ile stoves—scentin' up the house and takin' away your appertite before hand; nor gas stoves, to be bustin' when you least expect. Nothin' o' the kind for me! I couldn't git a decent meal o' vittles with 'em to save my life. Them that wants 'em can have 'em for all me! But I've seen a good many articles o' furnitoor, easy chairs and lounge-bedstids, and so on, that was real comfortable. Then agin, there is some so-called patent comforts that is tortures, and the men that invented 'em orter be hung.

When I was in Jersey visitin' my nefew, John

Longly, he had jest bought out a patent head-rest consarn, and he was all carried away with it. Thought it was goin' to make his fortin' in no time. It was a contrivance to screw on to the back of a chair, or any kind of seat, so's you could lean back somethin' like lyin' down. It was specially designed for folks travellin' in the cars.

Wall, I found out after I'd been with 'em a while that Mary, his wife, was a perfeck marter to that machine. She told me as much herself. Said whenever they went to any public place, or rode in the cars, John alwers took some 'o the head-rests along, and made her set with her head screwed into one, to advertize 'em. And she said it was awful, the pain she suffered. But she didn't dars to complain, for fear John would think she didn't take no interest.

One day there was an excursion on the cars, ever so many miles out into the country, and John invited Mary and me to go. I was pleased with the idee, and Mary would 'a' been, only for dread-in' the head-rest.

"Oh, dear, Ruth Ann," says she, "I thinks likely he'll put one on to both of us!"

"Don't worry!" says I, shettin' my teeth together like a trap, so I shouldn't let out no more.

You see I'd thought the thing over, and I'd made up my mind to larn John a little lesson if I had a chance.

Well, we went to the excursion. We enjoyed the fust part o' the ride, lookin' out o' the winder and watchin' the folks round us; a queer lot they was. You know all sorts ginerally goes to excursions. There was one family right in front of

us that didn't seem to be makin' a pint of enjoyin' themselves, whatever else they was doin'.

It was a woman and three little girls. I s'pose the woman was their mother, but no old maid ever lived that was half so fussy as what she was. She wouldn't let them children *wink* hardly. It was scold and fret the whole durin' time. If one on 'em leaned forrard or backards a mite or nes'led round, or stood up, it was, "Don't, Jane Mariar! don't, Sary Ellen! or don't, Car'line Elizy!" I did pity the poor little things; they looked as if they didn't dars to breathe nateral.

Finally, the woman gives the littlest one (she wa'n't much more'n a baby) a smart shakin', and says she, "Now, Sary Ellen, if you don't set down and keep still, you shall take a *big spunful o' caster ile*, quick's we git home!" Upon that the poor little creatur' crep' into a corner of the seat, and began to whimper pitiful.

"*Caster ile!*" says I to Mary. "If that don't beat all for a punishment!"

"I never looked upon it as much else," says Mary, laughin'.

"I don't care; she's an onhuman mother, any way!" says I, and I was jest thinkin' how I'd like to make her swaller a whole bottle full, when John come along in with a couple o' head-rests under his arm. He'd sold a number in the forrard cars, and he was feelin' pretty well over it.

"Ruth Ann, and Mary," says he, "you must be gittin' tired; le'm me put you on a rest? They tell me," says he, awful elated, "that this 'ere rest is wuth its weight in gold! I alwers knew there

was money in it, and I didn't make no mistake, now don't you forgit it !"

"Oh, yes," says I to John, "I should admire to have one on ! They must be a dretful comfort."

Mary, she stared as if she didn't know what under the sun to make of me, but she didn't speak.

He put mine on fust, and then Mary's, and givin' us some directions in case folks wanted to know the price or buy, he went off into the smokin' car.

After he'd gone, we set and looked at one 'nother a spell, and then we begun to squirm. "Mary," says I, carm and candid, "this 'ere head-rest may be a boon to a hearty man with narves of steel and sinews of iron, but you'n' me hain't got the constitushion for it." She smiled a sickly smile, and that was all.

Pretty soon I begun to be in crampy pains all over, specially down the spine o' my back. I tried to move a grain, but in doin' so, I give my neck a wrench that made me scream right out.

"Mary," says I, "I do believe I've got *serrybro spinal-getis*."

"Oh, dear !" she says, "I hope not. How do you feel ?"

"I feel as if I should fly all to pieces ! That's how I feel !" says I, savage as a meat ax.

"Oh, hush ! Don't speak so loud. Folks 'll hear, and then they won't buy. We mustn't spile the sales ! But, oh dear me," she went on in a faint whisper, "I believe it's wuss'n common to-day !"

She was pale as death, and her eyes looked turrible pitiful. The sight of her seemed to be the last straw with me, and I got so excited that I was on the pint o' doin' some desperate thing, when I looked up, and there was John, sarnterin' along in smilin', pleasant as a baskit o' chips. And I remembered my little plan.

"Hullo! How do you like it?" says he, lookin' at us and then round on the folks in the car, as much as to say, "Ladies and gentlemen, what luxury!"

"Oh," says I, bracin' every narve in my body to speak common and ordinary, "it's complete! I shall buy some to take home with me. But I want to understand all about 'em fust; how they work and everything. You jest take our'n off now, and let Mary show me how to put one on you, then I shall understand."

He was awful pleased to find me so took with his machine. He let us out, and settin' down oppersite to us, stretched out his legs, and lay back as if he was goin' in for solid comfort now.

Mary looked dumfounded, but she showed me how to screw the long part on to the back of the seat, and how to fix the clamps, one on each side of John's head, and tighten 'em up. I give 'em an extra turn or tew, and I'm free to confess that I enjoyed doin' of it.

"I guess you've got 'em screwed up a *leetle tight*," says John, smilin' gastly. "Oh, no," says I: "they're jest where ourn was, and ourn was beautiful and easy."

He set for a minnit, and tried to look carm

and comfortable, but finally begun to move round and squirm jest as we did.

"I guess," says he, "that I must have it took off now. I should love dearly to set with ye and rest longer, but I must go—I must go and *see a man*."

"Nonsense!" says I, "set still and enjoy yourself; we can't spare you yet. Besides, folks are all lookin' at ye and thinkin' how comfortable you look. You'll spile your sales if you go jest now." He mopped his face with his hankerchif. "Wall, then," says he, "you'll have to loosen these clamps a grain. They don't seem to fit my head jest right somehow."

"Fit your head!" says I. "Why, I thought they fitted everybody's head! We didn't have no trouble, did we, Mary?"

I fumbled round and pertended to loosen 'em, but I didn't; I tightened 'em, if anything. He was ashamed to say any more, but he *looked* savage.

I took out my knittin' and set down side of him, and begun to talk careless and happy as a cricket. I joked and laughed and made fun, and didn't take a mite o' notice of his sufferin's.

Mary, she begun to see what I was up tew, but she didn't hardly dars to interfere. She was most a cryin'; she couldn't bear to have her great strong husband suffer what she had herself. I could though, for I knew it would dew him good.

Bimeby he couldn't set still a single minnit, he was in sech pain. I knew jest how he felt. "Why, John," says I, "how res'less you be; keep

still now, and try to have a nap. I won't talk to you no more."

But jest at that ere pint of time I s'pose he give out, for he threw up both legs and arms, give his neck a twist that snapped the old machine into a dozen pieces, and streaked it out o' that car, so quick that you couldn't hardly see him.

How folks stared. "Nightmare!" says I, real loud. "He's dretful subjeck to nightmare whenever he falls asleep. Pity to spile the valuable head-rest, wa'n't it, though?" Then I stooped down to pick up the pieces and most died a laughin'.

I had a letter from Mary the other day, and she says that John has gone out o' the head-rest business.

Moril: There's nothin' like *personal experience*.

I guess that head-rest was a humbug sure enough, and everybody found it out, that had anything to do with it, but of course there *is* inventions that seem to be real blessin's to mankind.

There's one that's ginerally considered sech that *I'm* dead set aginst, and while I'm on this subjeck I'll jest give it a little hit. I refer to the electrick light. I say it is a flantin', darin', blasfemous thing! A slap in the face o' natur', as you might say! Gas was bad enough, but it didn't put out the moon and stars, and make all the lights in God's fundament look sick and silly!

I think it becomes human natur' to be kinder rev'rent and 'umble, seein' we're only the dust of the 'arth, and I tell you the electrick light won't prosper!

One thing: it makes everybody look like dead folks, and I'm glad of it! Nobody won't have it in their houses, seein' it ain't becomin'!

I ain't *afraid* o' the electrick light though, wicked as it is, but I *am* afraid of the *telefone*! I don't dars to use it; never 'tempted tew but once. That was when I was visitin' to brother 'Lonzo's. He had one in his store and another in his house, and sister-in-law Sarah seemed to take solid comfort talkin' through it. It was right in the front entry fastened up against the wall, and I declare I used to hate to go past it for fear it would speak or dew somethin' tew me.

Sarah she tried to git me to use it; said I wouldn't feel so about it after I'd used it a few times; but I didn't git up my courage to try, till one day when she was out, I thought I'd go alone and speak through it; then if anything happened nobody'd be there to laugh at me.

Wall, I took the trumpit that hangs tied on to it, and put it up to my ear, and pounded down the button twice, jest as I'd seen Sarah dew, and buzz, buzz, whir, whir, went the most on-arthly noise you ever heard; then snap, snap, and crackle, and out of it all, a terrible voice from way off somewheres said, "*I'll call for you to-night! Be ready!*"

I dropped that trumpit and flopped down into a chair, all of a heap! There Sarah found me, fainted clean away! I told her about the noises and the words that was spoke, and she said it wa'n't nothin' oncommon. Somebody else was talkin' on the same line. But I couldn't get fed o' the notion that it was the evil one himself, and I

more'n half expected he'd be round after me that night, to carry me off bodily, but he didn't come. I guess he thought a good scare was all I deserved. They laughed at me and argered with me, but I'd got enough, and I haint never tampered with a telephone from that day to this.

I must tell ye how Deacon Jones got fooled, when I was to his house last summer. You know the deacon's awful savin', and he hadn't took no newspaper for years; said how he could hear enough o' the wicked doin's of the world without payin' money to read about 'em.

Wall, he went over to Bangton one mornin' to carry some butter and eggs, and buy groceries and one thing n'other they was needin', and Mis' Jones and me we had a good long day all to ourselves.

Between sundown and dark, we was settin' together knittin' and talkin', when the deacon come in. He laid his bundles down on the table without sayin' a word. He alwers invariable used to say, "There, wife, there's your groceries; use 'em sparin', use 'em sparin'." So this time we didn't know what to make on him. He looked oncommon sober, too.

"Father," says Mis' Jones, "what's the matter? Didn't the things sell well?"

"Yes, the things sold well enough," says he, "but I found out somethin' down to Bangton that's jest about upset me."

"The bank haint failed—"

"No, no! For the land sake, ain't there no troubles in this world but *money* troubles!" says the deacon real snappish.

"Why, yes, of course," says Mis' Jones, "but dew tell us what *is* the matter!"

Then he set down and told us. "You know Widder Grimes' oldest boy, James, has been to work in Barker's grocery store for more'n a year. You remember what a nice boy he's alwers been,—good habits and all that,—and sence his father died he's the main stay o' the family, as you might say. It was only the other day his mother was tellin' me 'bout him; how well he was gettin' along, and how Barker meant to take him in pardner this fall. She seemed so proud and happy over it. She's jest bound up in that boy! But I'll tell ye how it was. After I'd done my arrants and packed all the bundles away under the buggy seat, I went back into Barker's store and set down on a box to eat a bite o' lunch and rest me a minnit, when James Grimes come in. I noticed he looked kinder queer. He steered straight for the back end o' the store, and leanin' up agin the wall, begun to go through with the silliest lot o' performances I ever see. If he hadn't been more'n six year old, I should a thought he was makin' believe at some kind o' child's play! He pertended to be talkin' to somebody, hollered "hullo!" and "all right!" and a whole mess o' stuff, then laughed as hearty as could be, at his own nonsense. I couldn't believe it of James, and I turns to Jeff Adams, standin' by me, 'Drunk, ain't he?' says I. Jeff didn't make n^o answer, only winked one eye and grinned. It was a good joke to him I s'pose, but it wa'n't to me; I tell you I felt like death, and I went and got out my team and come away as quick's I could. And

the wust on't is, it 'll jest about kill the Widder Grimes!"

Mis' Jones wiped her eyes, "Poor woman, God help her!" says she.

All of a suddin an idee popped into my head I says to the deacon:

"Did James say 'Hullo!' when he fust begun to talk?"

"Yes. He kep' sayin' on't over'n and over."

"And didn't he hold somethin' up to his ear?"

"I didn't mind. There was a lot o' things all cluttered up hangin' on the wall behind him; corn poppers, and tin-ware, and so on—but why, what are you drivin' at, Ruth Ann?"

"Wall," says I, "I think James was jest talkin' through a telefone—one o' them talkin' machines, you know."

"*Telefone!*" says the deacon, all struck of a heap. "I've heerd on 'em. Do you s'pose they've got one in Barker's store? I dunno."

"How *should* ye know *anything*, for that matter, when we don't take no newspaper!" said his wife, kinder spiteful.

"I swanny!" says the deacon, "if I don't believe you're right, Ruth Ann! James *wouldn't* git drunk—I might a knowed it!"

He went off post haste over to neighbor Fuller's to make inquiries, and he found out that Barker *had* got a telefone, and that James Grimes was stiddy as an eight-day clock, jest as he alwers had been.

The best on't was, the deacon concluded to take a newspaper.

MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE.

Have you ever had anything to do with this 'ere life insurance business? If you hain't you'd orter be thankful that you never got drawed into it. Like enough it's a good thing in some cases, but then agin it makes a sight o' mischief.

You remember Uncle Joe and Aunt Betsey Flanders up to Dobson's Corner? Everybody knows 'em that ever lived nigh the Corner. They've alwers been considered likely folks, only ruther tight and graspin'—at least Uncle Joe. I guess Aunt Betsey is free-handed enough.

Wall, I jest wanted to tell ye what a piece o' work that insurance business made with them.

In the fust place, it did seem as if a eperdemick of all sorts o' travellin' consarns had struck the town that summer. There was patent medicine men, healin' mejums, fortin'-tellers and lightnin'-rod men, and last of all an insurance agent come along, and he got hold of Uncle Joe the fust thing, and followed him up. He fairly harnted the poor man till he finally give in he'd have his life insured if his wife would have hern.

Wall, one day Uncle Joe come home to dinner. I remember we had biled dish that day. It was his favorite dinner; seemed as if he couldn't never git enough, specially of cabbage. He often used to say to his wife:

"Betsey, there ain't nothin' so good on the



AN INSURANCE AGENT GOT HOLD OF UNCLE JOE AND FOLLOWED HIM
UP, TILL HE FINALLY GIVE IN HE'D HAVE HIS LIFE INSURED.

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face o' the airth as pork and cabbage!" So they had it once and sometimes twice a week. But that day I speak on he might as well been eatin' chips and water for all sense he took on't. He seemed to be thinkin' out somethin' awful deep and serious, and there he set and sometimes most forgot to eat.

Aunt Betsey she noticed it, and bimeby she says, "For pity's sake, father, what's the matter with ye? Ain't you goin' to eat your cabbage? That's only your fust help, too. I hope to massy you ain't sick!"

"Sick! no," says Uncle Joe, startin' up as if he was shot. "Do I look sick?"

"Why, no, I dunno as you dew, but you haint spoke sence you set down to the table, and why don't you eat your dinner?" says she.

"Do lemme be," says he. "Can't I have no chance to think in my own house?"

"Oh, sartin, sartin; think all you want ter," says Aunt Betsey. "But you ain't in the habit o' doin' much heavy brain work while pork and cabbage sets afore ye."

That's all there was said till we'd finished our dinners. Uncle Joe ate his biled injun puddin' jest as he had the rest on't—without seemin' to taste or sense it at all; then he laid down his knife and fork, tilted his chair back agin the wall, and, fixin' a sharp look onto his wife's face, begun:

"Wife," he says, "I've been thinkin' whuther no it wouldn't be a good plan *to git our lives insured.*"

"Good Lordy massy!" screams Aunt Betsey.

droppin' the puddin' dish and breakin' it all to smash, "what put that idee into your head? Don't ye do no sech thing, father; you'll be sure to up and die. I never knew it to fail!"

"Do talk like a sensible critter," says Uncle Joe. "There's a man here repersentin' a *mutual* life insurance consarn; it's different from most on 'em. We both insure—you and me—and then if I die fust *you* git the money, and if you die fust *I* git the money! Don't ye see?"

Aunt Betsey she stood and stared at him for much as a minute, a piece o' the puddin' dish in her hand and her mouth wide open; then she dropped down into a chair all of a heap and begun to cry and take on.

"Oh, Joseph Flanders," says she, "have we lived together in peace and harmony now goin' on thirty year to begin all to once to trade and barter and gamble in one 'nother's lives? I wouldn't 'a believed it, I wouldn't."

Uncle Joe he explained and scolded and coaxed, but it didn't do no good, and he finally went off to work. But in the evenin' he fetched round the insurance man—he was a dretful ily, smooth-tongued feller—and the upshot on't was that, somehow between 'em, they finally got Aunt Betsey to say she'd go and be examined and have her life insured, though she stuck to it she didn't approve on't no more'n ever.

The next mornin' Uncle Joe started right off with her to the insurance office, for fear if he waited she'd change her mind. They found the doctor there all ready to examine 'em, and a clerk with a list o' questions a yard long before him,

set scribblin' away at a table. When they was all ready, he picks up the list, and says to Aunt Betsey without lookin' up:

"*Colored or white?*"

"*What!*" says Aunt Betsey.

He says it agin, just as if he was a machine.

"*Colored or white?*"

"Young man, if you mean am *I* colored or white, jest look and see for yourself. I never *was* took for a *nigger* yet!" says Aunt Betsey.

"Married or single?" he continnered, scratchin' away.

"You sassy boy!" she screams. "Do I *look* like an old maid? And ain't my husband along with me? Ketch me *here* if it wa'n't for him," she grumbled.

Then he asked her how old she was, and how old her father and mother and gran'father and gran'mother was when they died, and what they died of, and a lot more. Then they went through the same rigmarole with Uncle Joe, and got 'em both so tuckered out and mixed up that when they come to the children they couldn't make out between 'em whuther it was their darter Sary Ellen that died o' the measles and John Henry o' the scarlet fever, or Sary Ellen of the fever and John Henry o' the measles. After a good deal o' talk the agent said it wa'n't essenshul, and put somethin' down and let it go.

Then the doctor he took 'em in hand. He took Uncle Joe fust. He rapped on his back, sounded his lungs, and measured his chist.

"You're a tough old chap, ain't ye?" says he, when he got through. Live to be a hundred year

old if you don't die of *apperplexy*. Good feeder, ain't ye?" givin' him a punch in the stummuck.

Now Uncle Joe's stummuck *is prommynent*, and he knows it, and he took every word the doctor said in dead arnest.

"*Apperplexy!*" he gasps; "you don't mean to say I'm inclined that way, do ye, doctor?"

It tickled the doctor to see how he'd scairt him, and he says, very sollum: "If we hadn't all got the seeds o' death in us, we shouldn't never die."

Aunt Betsey she knew well enough what he was up to, and she pulled Uncle Joe's coat-tail: "Don't ye see, father, he's only jokin'," she whispered.

But he was scairt and nervous, and he couldn't git over it so easy.

Then they examined Aunt Betsey; they measured her round the waist for one thing.

"I hain't got no call to be proud o' my waist now, I know," she says to the doctor, "but I've *seen* the day I wore a eighteen-inch corset!"

"Is that so? Twice eighteen's thirty-six," says the doctor. "You ain't *no silph* now, that's a fact."

"I hope not," says Aunt Betsey; "I *hope* I'm a decent woman," she says, drawin' herself up some.

"Oh," says the doctor, "I guess silphs is good likely women enough, only they don't generally have much waist to 'em."

"Oh? I shouldn't wonder if they pinch 'em in—some women do," says Aunt Betsey.

"Like enough, like enough!" says the doctor, winkin' one eye at the clerk.

After they'd got done measurin' they sounded her lungs, and so on.

"My inward orgins is all right, I guess," says she, laughin'; "if they ain't I never hear nothin' from 'em."

"What! don't your heart never go whipperty whop, when you get berlated to meetin', and have to hurry down stairs, with your gloves and bun-nit and parisol and him-book and clean handker-chif in one hand, and your husband's clean color in t'other?"

"Yes, it does," agrees Aunt Betsey, laughin' harty, "specially when I find father's gone off after all, without even changin' his shirt!"

But Uncle Joe didn't smile. "Do you think there's anything the matter with mother's heart?" he asks.

"As I told ye before, so I tell ye now," says the doctor, sollum as a judge, "if the seeds o' death wa'n't in us all, we shouldn't never die."

"La, now, father," says Aunt Betsey, "don't you worry. My heart is sound's a nut. The doctor can't scare *me*."

The doctor didn't say nothin', only he winked one eye agin to the clerk, and the clerk laughed. I think that doctor was real mean. I always did hate these winky men. Anyway, he got Uncle Joe so kinder narvous and worked up, that he went home with his head full o' notions about his own health, and his wife's too.

Not long after, Aunt Betsey come to me one mornin', and says she, "Ruth Ann, I can't stan it! I hain't had a decent night's rest sence we got our lives insured. If I even turn over in my

sleep, or snore the leastest mite in the world, your uncle springs up on end, and asks me if I ain't sick? Where I feel bad? and so on. Last night, after he'd waked me up once or twice, I says to him, "Father, do for pity's sake lemme alone! If I ain't sick now, I shall be pretty soon, in good arnest! if I've got to be broke o' my rest every night in this way! And you don't sleep at all, yourself, do ye? What ails ye? What makes ye so dretful wakeful and anxious? For the land's sake, don't lay awake to worry about *me*—I'm all right!" says I.

"Be you *sure*, mother?" he says. "Don't you feel no trouble about your chist nowheres? I thought you breathed kinder queer."

"What under the canopy be you drivin' at? You make me narvous!" says I, out o' patience.

"Oh, nothin', nothin'," says he, "only you know what the doctor said when you was examined. I should hate to have ye took away suddin and I not know it."

I begun to understand. "Oh, that's it, is it?" says I. "Wall, if you lay awake to see *me* die, you'll have a long job of it! That doctor was foolin', and if you wa'n't a gump and a fool you'd know it! I hain't got no heart disease, more'n you have, and I mean to live to be a widder yet!" says I, "for I was kinder mad to find him right on hand, as you might say, to have me die."

He didn't wake her up no more o' nights, but he seemed so absent-minded and queer, that we begun to feel afraid his brains was affected.

The wust thing he did, and what worried Aunt Betsey more'n all the rest, was that he 'bout as

good as left off eatin'. It was curis to watch him at the table—he was naterally sech a hearty eater, ye see—but now, he'd set and pick over his vittles and chew away an awful while on next to nothin', and git up from the table lookin' hungry and miserble.

Aunt Betsey watched him 'till she couldn't stan' it no longer, and one day she says to him, "Father, what are ye layin' out to dew? Anybody'd most think ye was tryin' ter starve yourself to death. I bet you've lost ten pound o' flesh within a month!"

"Do you think so?" says Uncle Joe, lookin' as pleased as could be. "Guess I must git weighed and see." After that he ate a little more free, but not like himself, and Aunt Betsey continered to fret.

"I declare," she says to me, "I don't take a mite o' comfort cookin' for your uncle now-days; he don't seem to relish a single thing! There's them last mince pies that I took sech pains to make extry nice—he hain't even tasted on'em! And did you hear what he said to-day 'bout cabbage? When I went to help him to some, he says, says he, I guess I won't take none, Betsey; cabbage is *ruther hearty* for me."

"*Ruther hearty!*" says I, "for the land's sake, what does a strong workingman like you want, if it ain't suthin' hearty! I thought cabbage was your favorite, too," says I.

"Wall, wall," says he, as cross as a bear, "can't a man change his mind? Do lemme eat what I wan' ter, cant ye?"

"Sartin," says I, "only if you've made up your

mind to live without eatin', jest say so, and I won't work and slave cookin' for nothin' hereafter," says I.

"Oh, wall," says he, "I thought I'd kinder diet for awhile and see if my health wouldn't be better."

"*Die it!*" I says, "guess you will, if you keep on, but you ain't sick *now*, more'n the cat is, not a mite!"

John Hodge, one o' the neighbors, dropped in next evenin', and he got to talkin', 'mong other things, about smokin'.

"Smokin'," says he, "is a injurious habit. My father declared in his last sickness that he hadn't no doubt but what it had shortened his life by full ten year, and I believe he was right."

This idee so struck Uncle Joe that he 'most jumped out of his chair. "Strange, I never thought o' that afore," he muttered kinder to himself.

"I should say he lived long enough, in all conscience," says Aunt Besey. "Who'd wan' ter live to be more'n eighty-seven year old?"

Wall, if you'll believe if, from that night Uncle Joe begun to give up his pipe! and a more miser'ble, restless critter I never wan' ter see.

One evenin' he held his old pipe in his mouth 'till bedtime, and there he set, seemin'ly wrastlin' with the longin' to smoke. He couldn't read his paper, nor settle down to do nothin'. Aunt Betsey, she'd seen what was goin' on all along, and hadn't said a word for, nor aginst; but that night he was so oncommon oneasy that she felt real bad for him. She goes down sullen and draws a

great mug o' cider and fetches it in, 'long with a dish o' nuts and apples. But Uncle Joe didn't take no notice on 'em. So bimeby she lays her hand onto his shoulder and says real coaxin':

"Come, now, father; I don't believe it's a good 'plan for a man of your age to give up his pipe—do you? I can't see as it ever did you a speck o' hurt, and I wouldn't torment myself no longer. Come, lemme light your pipe now, and you have a good smoke, and git carmed down and go to bed."

He knocked the pipe out of her hand, and started up like a crazy critter.

"Clear out, and hold your tongue, will ye!" he shouted. "A pretty wife you be! If you's a decent woman you'd be helpin' me to perlong my life, instid o' doin' all you can to shorten it!"

"Heavens and airth!" cries Aunt Betsey, "have you gone ravin' crazy, father! What *do* you mean!"

"I mean," says he, savage as a meat ax, "that you've been all your life helpin' on my apperplexity; stuffin' me up with your dumbbed mince pies, and the old Harry 'n all! And that ain't enough, but now you must coax me to keep on smokin' when you know it's goin' to shorten my life by ten year or more! But I can see through your little game, and I'll outwit ye. Yes, I'll outlive ye yet!" He yelled it out, glarin' at her like a mad man, and brought his fist down on to the table with a blow that tipped over the cider-mug and sent the apples rollin' all over the floor.

It a' most took away Aunt Betsey's breath for

a minute, but she looks him square in the eye, and says she, "Joseph Flanders, you are either a consummit raskil, or 'less your brains is 'fected bad—one or t'other. But you haint got no *apperplexy*, and you never have had—not an atom; and if you wa'n't a gump and a fool you'd know it! That *miserable insurance business* is to the bottom on't all! I see it now! Fust you was goin' to have me die o' heart disease, and when I didn't fall in with that, you goes to work to *per-long your own life*. In plain English you're stewin' and plannin' for fear you shan't outlive me, and so git hold o' the four thousan' dollars! Oh, Joe!" she sobs, "if I wa'n't so 'tarnal mad, I b'lieve my heart would bust!" And she sets down and rocks herself back'ards and for'ards and takes on bitter.

When she spoke about her heart, Uncle Joe pricked up his ears, and looked at her sharp; then he takes up the candle and goes off to bed, without another word.

When he'd gone Aunt Betsey wiped up her eyes, and set and set, turnin' on't over in her mind. Bimeby she says to me, "Ruth Ann, I've been actin' like a born fool! This ere ain't the fust time your uncle's got off the hooks; though I wouldn't own it to everybody—but I've alwers fetched him round, alwers; and I will this time, *inside of twenty-four hours*, too, or my name ain't Betsey Flanders! He sets the world by me—your uncle does; but between you'n me, he ain't very well ballunced, and the least thing turns him one side. I tell ye, these men are alwers gittin' some contr'y kink or n'other into their heads, and

you've got to be perpared for 'em. Now," says she, laughin', "you jest hold on, and see how I'll fix him!"

I couldn't help wonderin' what in the world she meant, but she didn't say another word, and I didn't feel free to be inquisitive.

Next mornin' (it was Sunday mornin') Uncle Joe come to my door 'fore I was awake, and rapped. "Ruth Ann," says he, "you'll have to git right up, and see to your aunt; she ain't well this mornin'."

I was scairt to death in a minute. "Oh, Uncle Joe," says I, "is anything the matter of her heart?"

"I'm 'fraid so, I'm 'fraid so; Ruthy," says he, his voice shakin'. You dress ye as quick's you can; I'm goin right off to git the doctor."

Wall, there wa'n't much I could do for her. She seemed to be in dretful distress, and every little while she'd lay her hand onto her heart and roll up her eyes and groan pitiful. It 'peared as if she couldn't live any time at all, if she didn't git help.

When the doctor come she asked to see him alone a few minutes, and Uncle Joe and I tiptoed out, and left 'em together.

Wall, you wouldn't 'a believed it possible for a man to change his tune so quick's Uncle Joe did his'n! I'd got a comfortable breakfast sech as we alwers had a Sunday mornin'—beans and brown bread and coffy, and I made him set down to the table with me; but la! he acted more like a crazy critter than I ever see him before! He'd jump up every few minutes, and go to the door,

then come back and set down and groan and take on.

"Oh, Ruth Ann!" says he to me. "I know I've been a miserable, wicked scoundrel, and I don't deserve to have her live! But if she dies," he goes on, tarin' round the room, "if she dies, I'll murder that ily-tongued insurance chap, and *I'll buy a kag o' powder and blow up the house and my own miserable carkis in it!*"

I tried to carm him. "Mebby she ain't so bad—she may git over it," says I. "Let's wait and see what the doctor says."

"Oh, no, she won't never git over it," says he. "But she might a lived for years if it hadn't been for me and my cussed cruelty. She confessed finally that she had trouble with her heart, and she suffered agernies all night, but she wouldn't let me go away from her for fear she'd drop away and I not with her. And she forgiv' me, Ruth Ann, she forgiv' me over'n over! Yes, she did, bless her; she's an angel! Ruth Ann," he groans agin, comin' and wringin' my hand, "what shall I *dew* without my pardner? What's *all the world* to me without Betsey? Who cares anything about me but Betsey? Ruth Ann, if she *does* git well I'll deed this ere house and farm to her and every cent o' property I've got in the world besides, and she shall ride in her own horse and kerridge and have a hired gal—ten of 'em—forty, if she wants, as true as my name is Joseph Flanders!"

After this he seemed a little more easy, and drank part of a cup of coffy; then he goes on agin:

"Yes, I'll dress her with the best, and I'll treat her as she desaves—bless her."

Just here the doctor come out, and I dunno what made me, but I slipt past him, without stoppin' to ask how she was or anything, and went into the bedroom. There I found Aunt Betsey settin up in bed, stuffin' the bedclo'es into her mouth and actin' dretful queer. When she see 'twas me she hauled me down to her.

"Oh, Lord!—oh, Lord! I shall die, Ruthy, *I shall die!*" she whispered, laughin' and shakin' as if she'd go into fits. "I heerd every word your uncle said," said she. "So I'm goin' to have *forty hired gals* and ride in my *kerridge* and dress like a lady, be I? Didn't he come down harnsome? What did I tell ye, though, Ruth Ann? Don't *I* know how to manage Joseph Flanders? Not that I shall ever take the leastest mite of advantage—bless him; he's got the most lovin' heart in the world after all!"

"But, Aunt Betsey," says I, "do you mean to say you hain't been sick at all?"

"Oh, yes," says she, "I've been dretful sick, "and I'm just wore out with groanin' and takin' on. It's hard work, Ruthy, and *hungry* work, and the minnit your uncle goes to the barn to feed the critters I want you to fetch me in a big plate o' beans and brown bread and a cup o' coffy. The doctor told me to take a little nourishment," says she, laughin'.

Wall, I didn't git the hull truth through my head for some time, but when the doctor come in with Uncle Joe and said his wife had had a narrer escape (he didn't say from what), but with

care she might live now to a good old age, and I see him go to the winder to laugh, then I begun to understand.

At fust Uncle Joe was completely overcome. Then he set down on the side of the bed and held Aunt Betsey's hands, and asked her over'n over to forgive him, and told her what he was a goin' to dew to make her happy. They both cried a little, and bimeby Aunt Betsey says :

"Father, ain't ye 'fraid them poor critters to the barn are gittin' hungry?"

"I declare, I fergot all about 'em" says Uncle Joe, and he went off to feed 'em. Then I slipt out into the kitchen and back with a plate o' beans, and so on, and after Aunt Betsey had eat 'em she felt as good as new, and wanted to git up and dress herself.

"But," she says. "I s'pose I shall have to lay abed a little while for decency's sake; it's an awful punishment, and I deserve it for takin' in that poor innercent man so."

To make a long story short, Uncle Joe was as good as his word, so fur as his wife was consarned, and they took a sight o' comfort together after that. He give up the idee o' havin' the perplexity, and took to mince pies and cabbage agin as hearty as ever.

They let that insurance policy run out—in fact never paid the furst cent on it, and to this day they both hate the very sight of a life insurance agent.

HIGH ART AND ESTHETICS.

I visited to cousin Harnden's when I was down country. You know his wife's been dead a number o' year, and his oldest daughter, Juliet, keeps house for him.

I s'pose Joshua's wuth no end o' money, for they've got a great house as big as Square Jones's barn, with everything in it, and plenty o'servants to wait on 'em. Anybody 'd thought they might a took solid comfort; and so they would, if Juliet hadn't a been so crazy-silly—and all over nothin', and wuss than nothin'!

The name on't—whatever it was—that ailded her was "*High Art and Esthetics*," and she had it awful bad. Now, I can't give you a definishun of what that is—not in one word, but if you'll have patience and hear me through, you'll know what it means, as well as *I* dew, 't any rate.

In the furst place, I should say 'twas kind of an *epidemic* that rages 'mong folks that have got plenty o' money, and nothin' pertick'lar to do. It don't seem ter be compattyble with poverty. Poor folks never have it, any way. Them that has it, run of a notion that they must foller the rules of "High Art" in everything. That is, their furnitoor and dresses, and all their ways and doin's, must be what they call "*artistick*." And as nigh's I can make out, they git their notions and rules from travellin' in furrin' parts, and from

studyin' over musty old books and picters. The oldest, wust lookin' things please 'em the best; they did Juliet, anyways. She run to everything dismal and doleful. "*Subdood Effects*" she called 'em. I never see a single cheerful, good-lookin' effect—not one.

Juliet's own room was what she called a "simfony" in blue; the color o' things was, mostly blue, a dull, dirty blue. And there wasn't a rockin' chair nor a single comfortable piece o' furnitoor in the hull room. The only cheerful lookin' thing was a dear little picter of a bunch of golden rod, jest as nateral as life. It hung right over the mantletry shelf. I was surprised and pleased when I see it, and I said to Juliet, "Wall, there! you've got *one* pretty thing, haint ye?"

"Oh, yes," says she, "that's *one* o' the *harmonies*."

"Nonsense!" says I, 'taint nuther—no sech thing! I guess I know *golden rod*, it grows every wheres to home, common's dirt," says I.

My room tew was dretful stiff and uncomfortable. I couldn't feel home-like in it no more'n I could shet up in the sullen. Finally, one day, I went a' foragin'. I got Johnny and Sue—their's the two younger children, ye know—to take me up into the garret chamber, and there we found a lot o' things stowed away enough sight better'n them we was usin'.

Wall, I brought down a rockin'-chair and a lounge, and a braided rug or tew. I found an old Pilgrim's Progress, and I took that along for company; alwers have it on my table to home; read it every day same's I do my bible. Wall, I

put 'em all into my room, and it seemed more like home after that. Another thing I fetched down at the same time, turned out to be a great success.

You see I'd found out Juliet didn't have no mercy on her par. She'd even took possession o' the libr'y where he alwers set to read his paper, do his writin' and so on, and she'd furnished it all over in her high-falutin' way; put in that distressid straight-backed, hard-bottomed kind o' furnitoor, that's enough to make a young person's bones ache to set on, to say nothin' of a man sixty years old! She'd took up every rag o' carpetin' on the floor, and had it shined and polished up till 'twas jest as slippery as glass. Why, it was 'bout as much as your neck was wuth to walk acrost it. Her poor par had actilly fell down a number o' times, and it was a wonder he hadn't broke his bones! I told Juliet how't he *would* sures's fate, sooner or later. She only said, "Oh, he'll get 'customed to it."

It was a pitiful sight to see that old man of an evenin', a settin' up there, stiff's a poker, in his straight-backed, *high-art* chair, all alone in that great, dark, lonesome room! There was only one little lamp, and that hung right over his head. I s'pose it was awful *classick*, but it wa'n't any kind of a lamp, and never burnt wuth a cent. Why, it didn't begin to give as much light as one o' your karysene lamps! But Juliet said how it looked *dim* and *skerlastick*; and I should say it did, and wuss.

Then, them high-backed chars and things cast great. black shadders all over the room, and on

the hull it was the sollumest, lonesomest place I ever got into in my life! I used to go and set with Joshua evenin' after evenin', for company ye know; and sometimes John Aiken would come down from the parlor, where he was sparkin' Juliet, and set with us, and we'd have a real good time together.

John Aiken was a great favorite o' Brother Harnden's, and he'd been glad to seen Juliet married tew him. They'd been keepin' company together a good while, and I guess Juliet set enough by John, only sence she got into her *art tantrums* she seemed to be kinder haulin' off. But la, he knew more'n the hull pack o' them estheticks put together! *He* was tew well ballunced to go inter fits over an old piece o' furnitoor, or the color of a gownd! But Juliet used to snub him unmerciful sometimes, and I wondered at his patience.

But I was goin' to tell you what else I fetched down out o' the garret that day. Among the other things there was a great big armchair, all kivered nice with luther, and stuffed out in good shape. As soon as I set eyes on it I said to myself "that's jest the chair for Joshua, and he shall have it!" So I got one o' the servants to help, and we lugged it down into the lib'r'y; and that evenin' Joshua set in a decent chair for the fust time in a good while.

He seemed pleased as could be, and laughed, and said how it seemed a little like the good old times, before the *grand art innervation*.

Juliet was mad when she see it—said it didn't "harmonize," etsetery; but her par had his own

way for once in his life, and the chair stayed, and it did my soul good to see him set in it.

Juliet played the pianner, and she *could* play beautiful, if she was a min' to ; but she ginerally played what she called fewges, and simfonies, and sonnarters. Oh, they was horrid ! There wa'n't the least mite o' tune tew 'em, and they made me feel like a cat when her fur is stroked the wrong way.

Then she spent mornin's and mornin's with her dressmakers a gittin' up her "*coschumes*," as she called 'em. I used to hear her and her lady friends speak o' their suits as "harmonies in gray," "simfonies in blue" and so on. It was enough to make a cat sick, that's a fact ! And then their manners ! Wall, I can't describe 'em. You know how subdood and soft like anybody'll go round when there's a person lyin' dead in the house ? Wall, that was the way with them all the time. I never heard one on 'em laugh or speak above her breath, and when they walked they jest *glid* along like shadders or ghosts. They acted for all the world as if it was aginst the law to make any noise, or show any signs of life, or dew anything natrual.

Wall, that's how it was with Juliet ; and when I see it all, I says to myself, "It's a bad way for her, and for all consarned," and I kep' a turnin' it over in my mind, whuther no I couldn't *dew somethin'* to kinder fetch her to her senses, as you might say. One mornin' I went out into the garden before breakfast. Everything seemed fresh and sweet as a baby jest waked up from his nap. There'd been a little sprinklin' o' rain in

the night, and the flowers and grass was sparklin' all over with drops, harnsomer 'n any dimonds.

I was alwers a master hand for flowers, you know, and I picked a great, big bunch on 'em; roses and pinks and all kinds—mostly good smellin' ones, for naterally I like them best—and carried 'em into the dinin'-room.

None o' the family hadn't come down yet, and I took one o' them long-necked humly lookin' vases of Juliets (she called it a "*vaze*") and put the flowers into it. They hain't got a decent lookin' vase in the house, cordin' to my way o' thinkin'. I'd ruther have that white chiny one o' your'n there, with the violets painted on it, than any o' theirs. But some on 'em cost a mint o' money! I shouldn't dars to say how much; nobody in this town wouldn't believe me! There's two monster big ones standin' each side o' the door in the recepshion room, as they call it, and they cost I don't know how many hundred dollars! They're as tall as that barrel, and all kivered over with the horriddest picters! I never could bear the sight of 'em—but Juliet said they was *priceless anteeeks*." I told her "I didn't care if they was, they was *humly as fury any way*!"

Wall, as I was sayin' I put the flowers in the vase, and set 'em on the table. Says I ter myself, "that's the fust good lookin' bokay I've seen sence I left home," and I made up my mind that I'd see't we had one every mornin'. It made the dingy old room look cheerfuller, somehow. Jest as I got it fixed and turned best side tew, the door opened, and Juliet come loppin' along in, with her eyes not more'n half open, and her dirt-

colored gownd a hangin' onto her like a wet rag on a bean-pole. (I believe they call the color o' that gownd *sage green*, but it wa'n't the color o' no sage t'ever *I* see!)

When she'd got 'bout half way into the room, she spied the flowers: "Oh—mercy!" says she, leanin' against a chair as if she was goin' to faint away, "What *desecration!*"

"Yes, ain't they nice? I'm goin' to pick some for the table every mornin'," says I, takin' 'em up for her to smell on.

But she put out her hand to push 'em away, and gasped as if she was chokin' to death. "Aunt, Aunt!" she finally managed to say, "I must beg you not to arrange any more flowers for the rooms! *Your absence of all sense of the esthetick is painful!*"

"Oh, that's it, is it?" says I. "Wall, p'raps I *am* lackin' in that kind o' sense, but I've got some *common sense*, and that's what *you* need bad! Ain't ye 'shamed, Juliet Harnden, to be so put out with a little innercent bunch o' flowers! I know it would be diffikilt to fix a bokay humly enough to go with this room—I declare the sight on't is enough to give any healthy person an emetick! If you'd foller nater you'd do better! Nater can't be beat—not as a ginerall thing," says I, "and don't you forgit it!"

"Oh, you don't understand!" says she, givin' me a witherin' look. "Of course you don't; how can you?" and she waved her hand as much as to say "what's the use o' talkin'? Enough said."

But my dander was up. Now was my time to give her that overhaulin' that I'd had in mind so

long. So I looked her right straight in the eye and begins :

"Juliet Harnden," says I, "was you alwers jest as you be now? I didn't know you when you was *young*," says I (bearin' on to the young a little grain, for she was turnin' twenty-five, and I could see she winked). "Wa'n't there never no time when you looked and acted nateral? When you put up your back hair careless in the mornin', ducked your face all over in cold water, put on the fust gownd that come handy, and slid down the bannisters all rosy and wide-awake to kiss your par and mar good mornin'?"

"Didn't you never *love* nobody so's you'd be willin' to jump inter the fire for 'em? Didn't you never *hate* nobody so's't you'd like ter cut 'em up into inch pieces! Didn't you never git mad and scratch, nor feel bad and cry whole buckets o' tears! *Have* ye got any *heart* and *feelin's any-way*, sech as other women have?—that's what I want to know!" says I.

I stopped for want o' breath. Her eyes was open wider 'n I'd ever seen 'em afore in the world, but she didn't speak, and I went on. "Juliet," says I, "you are my own sister's child, and I want ter see ye happy, and I want you to make your pai and the children happy. A happy home is wuth more'n all the art in the world. And the color o' the chair kivers, the picters on the walls—even the bokay on the table can't make nor mar it.

"Juliet," says I, "your par's gittin' old, and he likes his ease and comfort better'n anteek lamps and artistick furnitoor. Them children,

too, would have more fun and grow faster, in clo'es that they could romp and play in, if they didn't look so much like picters. One other pint and I'm done. It's aginst nater for a smart, high-sperited young man like John Aiken, to stand bein' put down and *set on* for any length o' time, and if you care anything about him—and you know you do—why not treat him different? Think on't Juliet, think on't! I want you to be happy," says I, beginnin' to break down—for I'd made a long speech for me—"and what's to hender?" says I, then I bust out cryin'.

Upon that, Juliet riz up without a word, and went out o' the room very still, and shet the door behind her. I didn't know hardly what I'd done, and I set and cried for sometime. I'd freed my mind, anyway—that was one consolation.

But it all turned out for the best; for at dinner time Juliet came up to me of her own accord, and kissed me quite affectionate, and says she "Aunt Ruthy, you was right about some things you said this mornin'." Not another word; but that was a good deal for Juliet, and I felt encouraged.

I come home a little while after, but I met Joshua to' Square Bailey's golden weddin', and he said how't Juliet was a new girl, and I was the means ont. He said she was gittin' to be a fust rate house-keeper, and they all took heaps o' comfort together. They've set the day to be married, at last—she and John Aiken—and they insist that I shall go to the weddin' whuther or no. So I've been settin' up nights lately, to git the second

pair o' cream-colored silk stockin's finished off, to carry to Juliet, and I flatter myself that them ere stockin's is good enough for any girl to wear, whuther she's high art or low art, or only jest common folks.

SHE GOES WEST IN THE SLEEPING CAR—THE PUNKIN SIFTER MAN.

Yes, I've been out West; I went all of a sudden too, as you might say. You see, the fares was 'way down that fall, beyend all account, and they kep' goin' lower'n lower, till bimeby, when it got so'st we could go to Chicago for five dollars, I says to mother, "Mother, I do declare that's cheaper'n dirt! I'm a good mind ter start and go out to Illinoise and visit sister Gusty!"

That was the very fust word I'd said about it, and it struck mother all of a heap; but after thinkin' on't over, she was very favorable.

"I don't s'pose you'll ever have a better chance," says she.

"'Taint likely I ever shall," says I. So we flew round for fear the fares would go up agin', and in a few days I was all ready to start.

I'd got to ride two nights, and mother says to me, "Ruth Ann, you'd better take a sleepin' car and go comf'table. I should hate to have ye git into Chicago all tuckered out."

"Wall," says I, "I s'pose I might as well go the hull figger while I'm about it; I don't travel West every day." So I paid another five dollars for a berth as they called it, and I tell you I didn't begrudge it nuther, when I found out how comf'table it was. But it was somethin' new to me; I wa'n't never in one afore.

When I paid the conductor for it, he giv' me



ME LOOKED AT MY CHECK AND PINTED ON AHEAD TO A SEAT.

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the check and number o' my section, as he called it, and I went along into the car; but I couldn't see nothin' o' no bedroom nor no place to sleep. It looked jest like any other car, only nicer. So I says to the black man that seemed to be waitin' round a-purpose to answer folks'es questions,

"Where's my section,—my bedroom, you know?" He looked at my check and pintoed on ahead to a seat. "That's it, marm," says he. "We don't make up the beds till night, unless they're specially wanted."

"Wall, mine's 'specially wanted,'" says I. "But I don't see no bedstid nor nothin'—do we sleep on the floor? I ain't a goin' to pay no five dollars extry to sleep on the floor, I tell you now!" says I.

"Oh, we have a way to fix it butiful, marm," says he; and he pulled out a kind of a shelf and showed me how it went.

"Wall," says I, "s'pos'n you fix it now. I want my room in order to once."

"Oh, sartin," says he, grinnin' from ear to ear. "But do you wish to retire so early in the day? I hope you ain't onwell, marm!"

"Don't you worry about that; you jest go ahead and put my bedroom in order as I tell ye," says I. "I want to set down and enjoy myself."

By this time all the folks in the car was lookin' at us, and I see some smilin'. One lady steps for'ard and comes up close to me, and speaks low, so'st nobody couldn't hear but jest me, and says she, "Madam, you'll excuse me, if I advise you not to have your bed made up now; it isn't customary, ye know, and it might seem queer to the

rest of 'em. I wouldn't have anything done till night if I was you, and then you'll find it all right, I can promise you. I've travelled a good deal," says she. "Come and set down here and look out o' the winder; there's lots to see."

She seemed so pleasant and friendly that I couldn't dew otherwise than thank her kindly and take her advice. So I told the waiter he might be excused for the present; when I wanted him, I'd let him know.

Wall, I enjoyed the ride that afternoon real well, and 'long towards night I eat my lunch, and the black waiter—*porter*, they called him—got me a cup o' tea, and it made me as good a supper as I wanted.

Bimeby it grew dark, and them that had children along with 'em begun to have their beds made up, so I had a good chance to see jest how it was done, and when my turn come I knew all about it.

There was curtins to let down all round the bed as cozy as you please, though I found out pretty quick that I was goin' to smother, and had to open the winder a crack. It seemed awful queer at fust, and I thought to my soul I should roll out onto the floor in spite o' hemp; but after a while I got used to the motion of the cars and dropped off to sleep.

I knew we should go through the Hoosack tunnill right in the middle o' the night, but I meant ter see it all the same, and I told the porter to wake me up jest afore we got to it. So about 'leven o'clock he spoke to me and said we was jest a mile from the entrance o' the tunnill.

I set up in bed and looked out o' the winder, and I declare I wouldn't a' missed seein' that sight for no 'mount o' money! It was a clear, moonlight night, and we was ridin' through a sort of valley with hills on both sides on't. And them hills seemed to grow bigger'n bigger, and creep up nearer'n nearer, till finally they shet us in like dunjin walls. Bimeby there wa'n't no sky to be seen overhead only a little line o' light, and that grew smaller'n smaller till it was all dark everywheres. Then the injine give one onearthly shriek, and we plunged and dove right into the bowels of the mounting, as you might say! It grew deathly cold, and damp as the grave, and I was glad to pull the bedclo'es up round me.

It seemed as if we was a long time goin' through, but I found out it was jest fifteen minutes, and the tunnill is five miles long. I tell you, I felt pretty sollum settin' there alone in the middle o' the night, away from all my folks, ridin' at lightnin' speed through the insides of a mounting! I had some curis, awful thoughts. Think's I, "what's ter hender this 'ere mounting from fallin' down onto us, and buryin' us all up alive?" I was thankful enough when we come out into the blessed moonlight once more, I tell ye! But it was some time 'fore I could go to sleep agin, and when I did, it wa'n't for long. I guess I hadn't much more'n got to sleep 'fore I was waked up by the sound o' wimmin's voices, scoldin' away to a great rate.

I peeked through my curtains, and I see two wimmin and two children, all four on 'em loaded down with clo'es and luggage, and they was in a

terrible stew. It seemed the sleepin'-car they was in had broke down, and all the passengers had to leave their beds and find places in the other cars.

One o' the wimmin, the one that talked so loud, was a great fat woman, and she was 'busin' the railroad and all them that run it. How she did pile it on to 'em! And when she come to put the girl and boy to bed she biled over.

"Where's Mary's night-sack, I should like ter know?" she screamed to the other woman.

"I dunno more'n you do!" says the other woman.

"Jimmy's night-shirt is gone too, and both the children's stockin's and shoes!"

And then one on 'em lost her puss, and that was wust of all, and they tore 'round 'cordin'ly.

The porter he waited on 'em as well's he could, and promised to hunt up their things, and so on; but it wa'n't no kind o' use,—they wouldn't be satisfied.

"A lot o' good they'll do us, after these poor children have to go into Chicago nakid!" says the fat woman. "And where's the money to buy 'em some more, with the puss gone—that's what I want to know!" says she.

To make a long story short, after they'd waked up everybody in the car with their hullabaloo, and got some o' the men to swearin', they found their things—puss and all—jest where they put 'em, I think 's likely, and they did simmer down the quickest! We didn't hear another word out o' their heads that night.

Next mornin' it was interestin' to see the folk

come out o' their berths and dress themselves, and so on. Some couldn't find nothin' they wanted, and some o' the men and boys got their shoes changed, or lost them altogether. I got up real early and washed and dressed me, and had my bed put out o' the way, and then set down with my knittin' to watch the rest.

I could tell an old bachelor the minute he stepped out o' his berth; he seemed handy about dressin' himself, you know. But la, how awkerd the married men that hadn't their wives along. was! They'd tug away at the buttons and neckties till they got sweaty and red in the face.

I noticed one man in partick'lar. He was a-tryin' to get his necktie right. I watched the great bunglin' creatur' till I fairly got narvous, and I couldn't stand it no longer. I threw down my knittin' and went over to him, and says I, "Do le'mme fix your necktie for ye, now!" He looked as pleased as could be, and says he, "Thank you, madam; I find I miss my darter 'bout these fixin's."

Come to git up close to him he wa'n't so old a man as I s'posed he was from his head's bein' so bald on top. He couldn't a' been much older'n what I was, and I felt ruther cheap. But I tied as harnsome a bow-not as I could and made him kind of a kerchey and went back to my knittin'.

Bimeby, all them that wanted to went out into the dinin'-car for breakfast. The fat woman and the two children went along, but the other woman stayed behind. When the fat woman come back, you orter heard her go on about it.

"That dinin'-car," says she, "is a mean, swin-

dlin' humbug—jest of a piece with all the rest o' the doin's on this miser'ble road.

"They have the face out there," says she, "to charge seventy-five cents whuther you eat their breakfast or not. All I wanted was a cup o' coffy and a biskit, and I told 'em so; but that sassy nigger kep' sayin' 'seventy-five cents, madam—all same—seventy-five cents for breakfast, madam!' My explainin' didn't do no sort o' good; so when I found they was goin' to charge me full price any way, I was bound I'd eat that bill o' fare clear through if it killed me! And I did," says she, "and I dranked two cups o' coffy, and I feel like death—expect nothin' but I shall have one o' my dretful bilyous turns to pay for it!"

Wall, that man I tied the necktie for went out to breakfast too. and what do you think he come luggin' along back to me? A great plate o' the nicest of everything, and a nigger follerin' on behind with a cup o' coffy and a dish o' fruit!

"I thought mebby you didn't feel like goin' out, marm," says he, "and I hope you'll be so kind as to accept these vittles. One good turn desarves another, you know," says he. I was so flustered that I didn't know what to say, but I tried to thank him somehow. Afterwards I asked the woman that said she was used to travellin' if she thought 'twas proper for me to take the things, and if I hadn't orter offer to pay for 'em.

She laughed, and says she, "Take all you can git. The old chap looks as if he was akin' to spend his money. He's rich as mud, I know. Let him spend it if he wants tew."

"But," says I, "his wife—she may be savin'. I'm 'fraid she mightn't like it."

"His wife!" says she. "Don't you fret; mebbey he hain't got none. Didn't you see that crape on his hat?"

"No, I didn't," says I.

I couldn't help feelin' kinder worked up, and I detarmined to steer clear o' that man the rest o' the time if it was a possible thing. So I set and knit away industrious all day, and tended to my own meals promp', so he didn't git no chance to do anything more for me if he'd wanted to. But 'long towards night, I was lookin' out o' the winder (I had laid by my knittin', for the heel was ready to set, and I thought I'd let it be till lamp-light)—I was lookin' out o' the winder, as I said, and kinder dreamin' and thinkin', when somebody comes along and stands still right beside o' my seat. I don't s'pose you'll believe me, but before I turned 'round to see who it was, I felt in my very bones that it was my necktie man! And it was; and pretty soon he spoke, and says to me very respeckful,

"Madam, you remind me of a friend o' mine, so strong, that I hope you'll pardin me if I inquire your name."

I told him my name.

"Mrs.?" says he.

"No; Miss," says I, my cheeks burnin' like a live coal. Then he set down on the seat facin' me.

"Ain't it ruther dull settin' alone?" says he.

"Why, no," says I. "I hadn't thought on't."

"You hain't the same name as the friend I

spoke on," he continners, "but you do look enough like her to be a twin sister. Perhaps you *be related*. Her name was Dorsey—Polly Dorsey—and she was my wife's second cousin."

"So he has got a wife," thinks I to myself, and I answers up pretty stiff and haughty,

"No, sir," says I, "I ain't no relation to her—more'n Adam!" Then I picked up my knittin'-work and says I, "I wish to massy this 'ere heel was set, so's 't I could have somethin' to dew."

He looked at me kinder bewildered as if he didn't hardly know what to make o' my remark, and says he, "Oh!"

"Yes," says I, "I alwers like to have my knittin' when I hain't nothin' to think on; it's company."

He hitched around in his seat a little oneasy and says he, "I—I hope I don't intrude, marm?"

He said it so gentle and dignerfied that I felt a little 'shamed o' myself. "Oh, no," says I, "not at all, sir."

"You women have ruther the advantage of us men," he went on. "You can help along the lonesome hours in so many little ways," pintin' to my knittin'-work. "If I could only knit now," says he, laughin'.

I laughed too, the idee was so redickerlous.

"How does it happen," says I, "that you're travellin' alone? I sh'd thought you'd took your wife along, for company, if nothin' more. But mebbby travellin' don't agree with her?" says I.

"*My wife is dead, marm,*" says he, soft and sollum. "She's been dead now goin' on three year."

I was dumfounded ! I picked up my stockin' and begun to knit away like all persesst ; I didn't care if the heel wa'n't set !

Nary one on us spoke agin for some minutes. I dunno 's I should a' spoke till this time if he hadn't took out his handkerchif and blowed his nose like the last trumpit. That kinder started me up and brought me tew, as it were, so that by clearin' my throat a number o' times I managed to say, "How dretful bad it must be to lose a pardner !" and so on. Then we both made a business o' lookin' out the winder for quite a while.

Finally he turns to me and says he, "'Tain't no more'n fair, to tell you my name now, seein' 's you've told yourn."

"Wall, I dunno 's I'm very partick'ler," says I, knittin' away. I was dyin' to know all about him, but I didn't want to be bold nor for'ard, so I says, "I dunno 's I'm very partick'ler."

"My name," says my necktie man, layin' his hand on to his chist with as graceful a gestur' as I ever sees,— "My name is one I ain't ashamed to own. *I am Hannibal Hawkins—Major Hannibal Hawkins, of Punkinville*; and I am the sole and only inventor, perprietor, and owner of the celerbrated Hawkins Punkin' Sifter !" So sayin'; he riz up till he was six feet tall or more, and bent over and made me a harnsome bow !

I declare I was overcome ! Jest to think, there was that old punkin' sifter of mother's to home, that I'd used this ten year, and his very identikle name on it in black letters ! I'd read it to myself a thousand times—" *Hannibal Hawkins !*"

and here was the man standin' before me ! I felt as if we'd been acquainted all our lives.

" I wan' ter know," says I, as soon as I could make out to speak,— " I wan' ter know if you're the punkin' sifter man ! Why, we've used one o' your sist'ers to home a good many year. Couldn't keep house without it. I'm sure I'm real glad to make your 'quaintance, Mister Hawkins."

He was pleased enough. " Why, yes," says he, rubbin' his hands, " you 'n me orter be friends, sartin !" Then he set down agin, this time beside o' me, and 'fore long he knew all about my folks, and I his'n.

Wall, to cut my story short, the next day, when we got to Chicago, he said he was goin' to be in the city some little time, and asked leave to call on sister Gusty and me. So I told him where to find us, and we shook hands and parted.

When I come to look at my knittin', it 'most set me into fits ! As true as I live, that 'ere stockin' leg was as long as a pillar case, and not a sign of a heel set to it !

IN CHICAGO.

When I got to Chicago, I was pretty tired, but I never felt happier in my life. You see the punkin' sifter man had made it real pleasant for me; and, between you'n me, there is somethin' in knowin' that somebody kinder likes ye, that warms the heart like a cup o' tea, now ain't there?

I told Gusty all about him, and we expected a call from him right away, but he didn't come. Two or three weeks went by, and still he didn't come, and finally we had to give him up. I didn't know what to think. Gusty did, and she says to me, "Ruth Ann, you've jest got dretfully 'took in,' that's all. I know the men—you can't put no dependence on 'em. It's out o' sight, out o' mind with them!" and so on and so forth.

"Gusty," says I, "is that the way with your husband?" (Everybody knows her husband is a perfeck slave to her—a good man too, if ever there was one.)

"Why, no," says Gusty, "I can't say's I've got any fault to find with George Henry."

"Wall, then," says I, "don't, for pity's sake, speak that way! If a woman's got a decent husband, she orter make a pint o' stickin' up for mankind in ginerall to pay for't. As for me, mebby I've got 'took in,' and mebby I hain't. There ain't no bones broke, and if there was 'twouldn't mend 'em to 'buse the men. But one

thing, Gusty,—the less said about it to me the better.” That was the end on’t; only in my own mind I sollumly believed in Hannibal Hawkins, and fully expected he’d turn up some day and make it all right.

Did you ever go to Chicago? If not, you never went nowheres, as you might say.

“Boston?” Boston’s well enough; I love Boston. But you take one of her streets and double it in wedth, and piece it out a few mile in length, and you have a street in Chicago. Then make all the grand stores grander and bigger. And set a lawger-beer saloon, with a sign o’ the Dutchman holdin’ up a mug o’ beer and lookin’ at it, between every third or fourth store, and you have a street in Chicago.

You might add to this, a bad smell, plenty o’ mud, and crowds of very good-natered, perlite folks. One thing I want to say right here about the Chicago wimmin. They hain’t got no bigger feet than Boston wimmin! I took partick’lar pains to notice.

I went round sight-seein’ a good deal with Ned, Gusty’s little boy; he knew the hull city like a book, and bein’ it was vacation, he was right on hand for goin’. One day he took me into a Chinese laundry. It was ’way down suller, where they had to keep the gas burnin’ all the time to see. They didn’t mind nothin’ ’bout our comin’ in: they knew Ned, he’d been there a good many times. They grinned when they see him, and kep’ right on with their work. One on ’em was sprinklin’ clo’es—I s’pose he called it. He had a hull mess o’ clo’es on a table, and he kep’ a turn-

in' on 'em over'n over, squirtin' the water out on to 'em from between his teeth, somehow. It looked curis enough, but awful shif'less, 'cordin' to my way o' thinkin'. There was two more ironin', and one seemed to be cookin' somethin' on the stove. I was alwers interested in the hethin'—used to think I'd like to go missionary-in'; and when I looked round on them poor benited creetur's, I felt for 'em. To think they didn't even know how to sprinkle clo'es in a decent Christian way!

I went up to the table where the two men was ironin' and says to one of 'em, "My good friend, do you know who made you?"

He set his iron down quick's a flash, and bowed very perlite way down to the floor: then he dusted off a stool with his big sleeve and offered it to me to set on, but he didn't speak a single word. I says agin, a little louder and speakin' 's plain as I could, "Do you know who made you?"

The man shook his head and bowed himself down to the floor agin. "No speakee Melican," says he, and pinte to the man sprinklin' clo'es. So I goes over to him and asks, "How long have you been in this country?"

"Oh, velly long timee," holdin' up his fingers, one, two, four.

"Do you know who made you?" He smiled very innercent-like, nodded his head, and went on squirtin'.

"See here!" says I, forgittin' all about who made him, "dew let me show you how to sprinkle clo'es like a civilized bein'!" And I put my hand into the bowl and showed him how

My stars! you orter see that Chinyman jump and hyper round! His pigtail flopped 'most up to the plasterin'! He seemed to think I was goin' to wet him, and I guess water is somethin' they don't 'low ter touch only in the way o' business.

When he see I only threw it over the clo'es, he carmed down, and smiled and nodded his head. "Velly good, velly good," he said,

Jest then another big Chinee that I hadn't seen afore, and a little boy, come in, each on 'em bringin' a dish o' somethin' steamin' hot that they put on the table. I says to the big one, "Be you a man or a woman?" for they was all dressed pretty much alike in long frocks with great floppin' sleeves to 'em. They all laughed when I asked that question, and the big fat one panted fust to herself and then to me, and says, "I samee lady—allee samee lady." I was glad to hear that, and I shook hands with her and felt more to home.

We stopp'd to see 'em eat dinner. They wa'n't a mite bashful, and they grinned at us and seemed mitily tickled. I must say they was as civil, good-natered folks as I ever come acrost, if they *was hethin'*.

There didn't seem to be but two kinds o' vit-tles. There was a big dish o' rice, and another of cabbage, all tore up into little pieces, with a mess o' ile poured over it. They brought up their stools all to once, and set down together. Each one took a little bowl of rice and hild it close under his chin, and opened his mouth and pushed the rice in with two round sticks, and kep' a pushin' on't in till his mouth was runnin'

over full, as if it had been a rat hole he was stoppin' up! They never chewed a mite nor shet their jaws together till they had put in a bowlful!

"But, after all," thinks I to myself, "I've seen good Christian church members to *church suppers* show wuss table manners than what these hethin Chinymen do."

As long as they couldn't understand me very well I thought I wouldn't try to improve 'em any more, and we left 'em to finish their dinner in their own way.

After that we went into a bird store, where they kep all kinds o' birds and a good many animals, specially monkeys. There was one man there lookin' at the monkeys, that thought he knew all about monkeys and the human race, too. He talked all the time stiddy to somebody, and finally he fastened on to me.

"Madam," says he, "I'm a Darwinyan." Then he went on to tell how our forefathers and foremothers way back was monkeys and baboons, till I got all out o' patience with him. I tried to shet him up or git away from him, but he kept follerin' me round and talk, talkin'. Finally, we stopped before an old gray-headed monkey, with a smooth face, that did look jest like a human bein', I must confess.

The Darwin man pintoed to the monkey and turned to me with a look of triump'. "There!" says he, significant.

"Yes, sir," says I, lookin' fust at the monkey, and then at him, "I *dew* see a *strikin' resemblance!* He *does* look enough like ye to be your *twin brother*, that's a fact!"

He didn't stay long after that, and he let me alone. I guess he was satisfied; he'd carried his pint anyway!

After 'I'd been in the city quite a spell and knew my way round some, I used to go out shop-pin' alone. One day I'd been tradin' in a great dry goods store—the biggest in the city—and was jest thinkin' I'd got 'bout through, when, in passin' by the lace department, my eye lit on to a harnsome lace shawl hangin' up for show. I'm dretful fond o' nice laces, and I dew enjoy to see 'em, if I can't wear 'em. Wall, I was lookin' at that shawl, kinder idle, not thinkin' of anything in particular, when a man stepped up to me and clapped his hand on to my shoulder, and turnin' to a clerk standin' by, he says, "Here's my woman, Davis."

I was awful scairt, and I tried to twitch away, but he hild on to me. I knew somethin' was wrong, and as quick as I could git my breath so's to speak carm and rashinal, I looked the man right in the face, and says I, "You're mistaken, sir; I ain't your woman nor anybody's else. I never was married." You see I didn't know but his wife, or somebody's wife, had run away, and he was after her—but he laughed, and so did the other man.

"Mister," says I agin, "I don't know you, but I see by your coat you're a perliceman,—won't you be so kind as to tell me what I've been a' doin' of? I'm a stranger here, and like enough I've broke some o' your rules without knowin' on't," says I, tryin' hard to keep from cryin'.

That perliceman he jest shet up one big eye



A MAN STEPPED UP TO ME AND CLAPPED HIS HAND ON TO MY SHOULDER, AND HE SAYS, "HERE'S MY WOMAN." (Page 173.)

and looked at me out o' t'other, and says he, "Oh, we all know how innercent *you* be, we do; that's why we call ye '*Simple Susan*,' ye know. Come along Susan, I've seen *you* before."

"I never see *you* before, and I hope to massy I never shall agin!" says I, gettin' mad at bein' spoke to so. "And, moreover, I want you to understand that my name aint '*Simple Susan*,' nor nothin' like it; and I won't go one step out o' this store with ye, till you tell me what for and where tew—not if you pull me to pieces!" says I.

"*Where tew and what for?*" says the perlice-man. "For *stealin'* a \$200 lace shawl right here yesterday afternoon—and you're goin' to the *lock-up*. Now you know jest as well as you did afore," and they both laughed as if it was a good joke.

"Where's the man that owns this store? I should like to see him," says I.

They sent for him, and he come right along. He was a great noble lookin' man, and he had a good face; I took to him to once.

"Mister," says I, "can these men take me off to the lobby when I haint done nothin'? Can't you tell me what to dew?"

He looked me over carm and serious. "I should say at fust sight it was '*Simple Susan*,' sartin'," says he; "but after all, there's somethin' about her that makes me think she ain't no thief. Perhaps we're mistakened, Davis."

"Oh, I beg pardin, sir," speaks up the perlice-man, touchin' his hat, "but I should know the woman in Afriky. Her picter's been in the *Rogue's*

Gallery for years. Lord, sir, the more innercent they look, the wuss they be! I know 'em!"

"Oh, you dew!" thinks I, growin' madder every minnit.

"Mister perliceman," says I, "'taint the wust thing in the world to *look* innercent, but its better to *be* so. And unless your looks belie ye, *your own picter* orter be hangin' in that ere gallery you spoke on." The other men smiled a little, and he turned red's fire. "Wall," says he, scowl-in' at me awful fierce, "I can't stand round here all day; I guess you'll have to come with me."

Mister Flood (I found out afterwards that was the store-keeper's name), he looked at me undecided and troubled. "There don't seem to be no other way jest now," says he, "but I'll call round and see you bimeby, and if you're the honest woman I more'n half believe you to be, we'll find some way out o' this."

I was so dumfounded and mad, and shamed, that all I could think or dew was to wish the airth would open and swaller me! *Me* bein' took off to the lobby—for *stealin'*? The tears come so fast I couldn't see to walk, and I went stumblin' along. I s'pose everybody thought I was a drunken woman.

The fust rashional thought I had was, "What would my friend Hannibal Hawkins say, if he see me now! I happened to look up jest at that pint o' time, and there, comin' straight towards us as fast as his long legs could fetch him, his eyes stickin' out of his head with astonishment, was the very person I had in mind—*my punkin-sister man!*

When we come up with one n'other, of course he see by my tears and so on, and by the company I was in, that somethin' dretful had happened. He grabbed my hand, and says he, "*Is it thus we meet at last!*" What is wrong with you my friend, what is wrong?"

The perliceman and I, we explained together; only our stories didn't exackly tally, and the perliceman ordered him to "make himself scarce, and not interfere with an officer o' justice in the discharge of his dooty!"

Mister Hawkins he drawed himself up to his full statur' of feet and inches, and says he, "I will accompany this lady to the place o' her desternation and find out a way to sarve her."

He looked so grand and so detarmined that the perliceman didn't see fit to object, and we all went along together.

Wall, when we got to the lobby buildin', who should be standin' on the steps waitin' for us but Mister Flood and brother-in-law George Henry! So I didn't have to be locked up after all!

You see when I went away with the perliceman I left my bag behind in the store, and Mister Flood in lookin' over its contints found George Henry's business card, and he happened to know him well. So he took the card and bag over to his store, post-haste, and they started out after us together.

George Henry laughed at me for bein' so stoopid as not to think to tell who I was, and where a visitin'. It *was* stoopid, sure enough, but I was so worked up I couldn't think o' nothin'.

Perhaps he would a been jest as stoopid in my place.

Wall, then I interdooced the punkin'-sifter man, and he explained how he found a telegraph waitin' for him that mornin' we 'rived together in Chicago, sayin' his mother was dyin', and he went right back home. But he hadn't never forgot me, and as soon as he could, he started agin for the West; and here he was, carpet bag in hand, as grand and harnsome as ever! I felt proud enough I tell ye, and I crowed over Gusty well. It had all come out jest as I had faith to believe it would, hadn't it?

When George Henry come home that night he said, how't they'd got the real thief—the real Simple Susan—this time. “And I have seen her picter,” says he, “and I do declare for't, Ruth Ann, you dew look enough alike to be *twins*! I couldn't blame nobody after I see that picter!”

I lay awake half the night thinkin' how curis it all was, and wonderin' if I couldn't do somethin' to help that woman that looked so much like me. I was so happy myself that I couldn't bear to think of misery comin' to any other woman. “She can't enjoy sech a business,” thinks I to myself. “I know now how it feels to be took up for stealin', and I'm sure she can't enjoy it.”

In the mornin' I says to George Henry: “George Henry, I want you to take me over to the lobby and let me see that woman. I believe it is my dooty to go to her.”

Fust, he said how't I shouldn't do no sech thing; and Gusty, she begged on me not to go.

"It's a disgraceful thing from beginnin' to end," says she, "and to do that would be wust of all. I wouldn't go nigh her. What would Mister Hawkins say?"

Knowin' how good he was, I knew well enough what he would say. "He set me an example of bein' good to thieves," says I, half laughin', half cryin', "and I mean to foller it; I'm a goin'," says I.

"Wall, if you must go, dew for pity's sake put on a thick vail," says Gusty. So I did, and we went along.

I think's likely you never happened to meet a person that looked so much like ye that you had to pinch yourself to find out which was which, as it were; so you can't imagine how queer I felt when I see "Simple Susan."

She seemed to feel queer tew, for when I took off my vail she drawed in her breath, and says she, with a curis smile, "I heerd 'bout you bein' took for me yesterday; I do hope you won't feel *lifted up* on account o' lookin' like the *celerbrated thief*, 'Simple Susan,'" says she, sarkastical. "Strange, ain't it, that a woman can look innercent as a baby and be a thief—and a *smart one*, too!"

"Oh, don't brag on't; don't Susan!" says I, "it makes me feel bad."

"If you come here to preach you can go 'long quick's you please," says she; and there was a turrible hard look in her eyes.

"I didn't come to preach, Susan; fur from it," says I, "though you may need it bad enough. But when I found out you looked so much like me, I felt kinder interested and sorry for you,

and jest called round to see if I couldn't dew somethin' to help you."

"Respectable folks ain't in the habit o' callin' on thieves," says she, lookin' at me sharp and suspicious. "Ain't you 'fraid I'll pick your pocket 'fore you git out, now?"

I clapped my hand to my pocket quick's a wink; then I was shamed o' myself and my face turned blazin' red.

"Forgive me, Susan," says I, "I did it 'fore I thought."

She laughed and shrugged up her shoulders.

"I never steal from anybody but *rich* folks," says she.

"But is it pleasant business? It's so awful *resky*, I don't see how you can enjoy it," says I. "I should want to know where I was goin' to sleep nights at least."

She laughed agin. "It's *prof'terble* sometimes," she says, "and then, it's vittles and drink to me to *steal from the rich folks, I hate 'em so!*" And she looked so fierce I said to myself I hope to massy I never looked like *that*. I hove a sigh, I couldn't help it.

"Wall," says I, "pretty likely you know what's right and what's wrong's well's I do. Mebby you went to church and read your Bible when you was a gal to home with your mar?"

"Oh, yes; you needn't mention *them* things," says she, kinder off hand.

"Susan," says I, finally, "have you got any family?" I see a change come over her face in a minnit. Her lips begun to work, and she looked as if she was goin' to cry. "Because," I

continnered, "if you have, mebbly I could do somethin' for 'em or take some message to 'em."

"I've only got a little boy," says she. "He goes round the streets all day playin' his violin. I s'pose he's at it now, and he don't know I'm shet up, so he'll go home to-night, and when he don't find his mammy, he'll take on and grieve and break his little heart!" Then she began to rock herself back'ards and for'ards and sob and cry and take on bitter.

"He's all I've got in the world," she said, "and I'd give every drop o' blood in my body for him. But he'll grieve for his mammy—he'll grieve for his mammy!"

I went up to her with the tears streamin' down my cheeks. "Tell me where to find him," says I, "and I'll look after him a little, and perhaps I can bring him to see you."

She riz up then and grabbed my hand, and kissed it and pressed it to her heart, but she never spoke a word.

"Mebby," says I, "for his sake, you'll be willin' to think 'bout—'bout goin' into *some other business*. Wouldn't it be better for the boy? Try to think on't."

She told me where to find the child—Julian Finnet was his name—and I went away.

Wall, I thought I wouldn' trouble the folks this time, so I never said a word, but went alone and hunted up the little violin-player. He was as pretty a boy as I ever set eyes on. He seemed to be a good boy, too, and the neighbors all spoke well on him. He was 'most distracted 'bout his "mammy"—as he called her—and it was a good

while 'fore I could do anything with him. Finally I got him to play for me, and the music seemed to carm him more than anything else. I ain't no judge o' music, but it did seem to me as if there was somethin' oncommon about the child's playin', and I meant to find out if I was right.

Now what do you think I did? I went over to that big store and called on Mister Flood.

"Mister Flood," says I, "I knew you was a good man, the minnit I set eyes on ye, and I hear that you do a great deal for your feller bein's one way n'another. Now I believe here's a chance, and I've took the liberty to come and tell you about it. Then I told him how I visited "Simple Susan," and how I believed there was good in her that we could git at through her little boy. I asked him to hear him play, and do somethin' for him, if he thought best.

Wall, the upshot on't was, Mister Flood dis-kivered that the boy was a *genyus*, and he got him a teacher and took care on him while his mother was in the lobby. And he was sech a good little feller, and so interestin' that Mister Flood got real 'tached to him, and the boy fairly worshipped *him*.

They managed to git the mother off, so she didn't have to go to jail, and when she found out all that had been done for Julian, and who done it she seemed all made over new. 'Tany rate the last I heard from her she was livin' an honest life, and her boy was playin' at concerts for good prices.

One thing more and I am done. The mornin'

me and Mister Hawkins started to come back East, little Julian come over and brought a box from Mister Flood, sayin' it was a *weddin' present*, and I mustn't open it till I got home. When I did open it, I found a harnsome lace shawl and a set o' laces for my neck and sleeves. And inside on the kiver was writ the giver's name and "*God Bless Aunt Ruth.*"

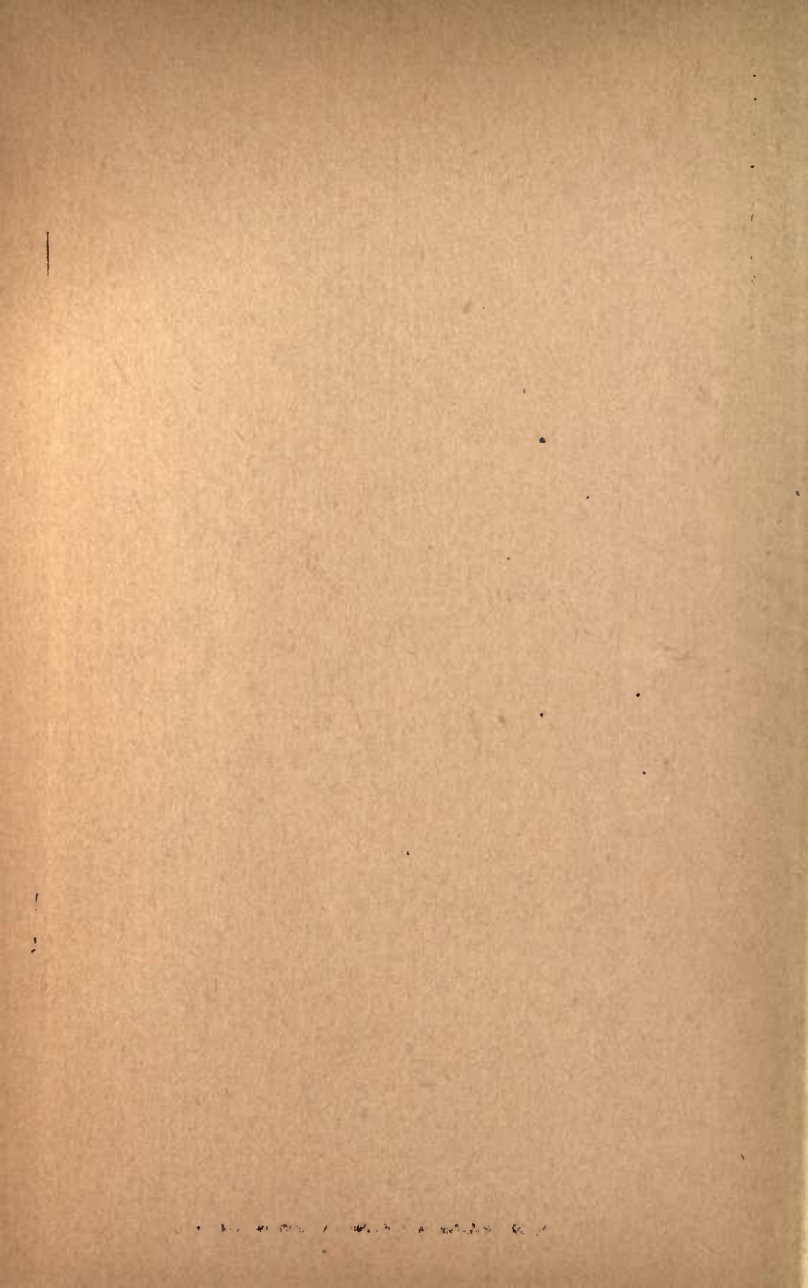
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